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ABSTRACT

A project provided technical assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) in selecting and recognizing 10 outstanding ABLE students via an awards ceremony and publication of a booklet and flyers in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Success Stories project. In addition to the 10 new stories, the project updated the achievements of 8 previous Success Stories winners. The project staff edited the nominations, made arrangements for winners' participation at an adult educators' conference, and paid their expenses. In addition, 1,500 Success Stories booklets were written, published, and disseminated. Each previous and current winner's page contains a description of the winner's ABLE program, its philosophy and accomplishments. Pennsylvania legislators received copies of the booklets, and local media covered the events. (The Success Stories booklet and publicity flyers are included in this report.) (KC)

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Success Stories: Partners for Progress

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FY 1997-1998
#98-8002 $23,745
Sherry Royce, Project Director
Royce & Royce, Inc.
1938 Crooked Oak Drive Lancaster, PA 17601
V:717-669-1663 F:717-560-9903

SUCCESS STORIES: PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS **was supported in part by the U S Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor the Pennsylvania Department of Education and no official endorsement should be inferred.**

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ABSTRACT – SUCCESS STORIES

Grant Recipient: Dr. Sherry Royce
Royce & Royce, Inc.
1938 Crooked Oak Drive, Lancaster, PA 17601

Project No. 98-8002
Grant Allowance: $23,745
July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998

Grant Director: Dr. Sherry Royce

PROJECT PURPOSE:
SUCCESS STORIES: Partners for Progress provided technical assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) in selecting and recognizing ten Outstanding ABLE students via an awards ceremony and publication of the *SUCCESS STORIES* booklet and flyers. This year's project marked the 20th Anniversary of the Success Stories project by updating the achievements of eight previous Success Stories winners as well as 1998's outstanding ABLE students.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:
Project staff edited the nominations, made arrangements for winners' participation at Midwinter Conference, and handled payments for the conference. Fifteen hundred Success Stories Booklets were written, published, and disseminated. Each previous and current winner's page contained a description of the winner's ABLE program, its philosophy and accomplishments. All 1998 Success Stories sponsors received 200 Flyers featuring their student's story that they could use for promotional purposes.

IMPACT:
Dr. Michael B. Poliakoff, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education attended the Legislative Luncheon and took part in the awards ceremony. Pennsylvania legislators received copies of the Success Stories booklet providing awareness of the role ABLE programs play in assisting Pennsylvania citizens to overcome educational barriers and become role models in their communities. Success Stories' sponsors reported local media coverage, which included a front page spread with a color photograph in the Reading Eagle Times and a citywide celebration for the four Philadelphia award winners. In addition, sponsors reported contacts with employers, community agencies, local government, and state legislators.

PRODUCTS:
A Final Report, 1500 Success Stories Booklets, and 200 flyers were produced. AdvancE has a copy of each of these products. Additional copies of the Success Stories Booklets were distributed to the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center and each of Pennsylvania's Professional Development Centers.

PROJECT CONTINUATION:
It is recommended that information about sponsoring programs continue to be included in Success Stories Booklets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
It is recommended that in 1999, a student guide be produced to enable teachers and tutors to construct reading lessons for adult students featuring the Success Stories booklet.

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Introduction

Ever since 1978, Pennsylvania has honored 10 exemplary Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) students at an awards luncheon and session at the Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education's (PAACE's) annual Midwinter Conference. A booklet describing award winners' life histories and achievements has been published yearly as a component of the Success Stories project. This project served as the model for adult learner awards established by other states (New York, Virginia, etc.) and national organizations (Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA), Inc.), the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), and still constitutes one of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) Bureau of ABLE's best awareness vehicles.

This year marked the 20th Anniversary of this project. Over the years, the number of nominations received from Pennsylvania agencies has increased as adult students in workplace literacy, family literacy, and homeless programs have joined ABE, ESL, and GED students in adult education classes and tutoring sites. In the past four years, the focus of the Success Stories awards has shifted from the enormous obstacles overcome by outstanding students to the partnerships between adult learners and adult program providers that have been a catalyst for Success Stories Students' self-esteem and accomplishments. The *Success Stories: Partners for Progress* Booklet featured not only the ten exemplary adult students of 1998 but saluted Success Stories' 20th Anniversary by updating the stories of eight previous winners in order to demonstrate the long-term benefits of adult basic and literacy education.

The SUCCESS STORIES project director and coordinator/editor was Sherry Royce. Dr. Royce, an ABE program director and special project director since 1967, has directed 48 special projects since 1976, including 12 previous SUCCESS STORIES projects. Two veteran adult educators assisted Dr. Royce in preparing winners to attend Midwinter Conference: Frank Nardone, director of the Adult Literacy Program cosponsored by Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 and the Luzerne County Human Resources Development Department and Jean Fleschute, coordinator of the Philadelphia-based Community Learning Center.

The SUCCESS STORIES Panel that reviewed the nominations and selected the ten students of the year was composed of: Frank Paul, Instructor at the Red Land Community Action Program, Peggy Greene, Instructor at the Harrisburg State Hospital; Caroline Henry, Director of ABE at

Harrisburg Area School District, Cheryl Harmon, Resource Specialist for Clearinghouse AdvancE, John Heisey, Supervisor of the Lebanon Adult Learning Center, Lyn Leto of the Lifelong Learning Center at Schuylkill IU # 29, Ella M. Morin, Division Chief Special Programs for the PDE Bureau of ABLE, Cynthia Presley, Vice President and Community Relations Officer at the Dauphin Deposit Bank in Harrisburg, Sherry Royce, Project Director for Success Stories, and Michael Wilson, Adult Literacy Director at Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16.

Success Stories has proven to be an effective awareness vehicle over the past 20 years. The SUCCESS STORIES luncheon and awards session was open to all adult educators attending Midwinter Conference with special invitations going to PDE officials and those legislators who had award winners as their constituents. The SUCCESS STORIES Booklet featuring student stories and descriptions of award winners' agencies was distributed to all PDE Bureau of ABLE programs and special projects, ABLE special task forces, Pennsylvania Department of Labor Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) programs, and advocates of adult education in the Commonwealth. In addition, all members of the Pennsylvania legislature and all Pennsylvania members of the US Congress received the Booklet as well as state departments of adult education, and adult education national and regional clearinghouses. Additional copies of the booklet were distributed to AdvancE, the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center, and each of Pennsylvania's Professional Development Centers. At the local level, Success Stories winners received newspaper and television coverage and were honored by their employers, community agencies as well as their programs and institutions.

This report is available from Clearinghouse AdvancE, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 11th Floor, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333. Phone from Pennsylvania 800-992-2283. Out of State telephone: 717-783-9192. Fax: 717-783-5420.

Body of the Report

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of *SUCCESS STORIES: Partners for Progress* was to provide technical assistance to PDE in the nominations process and in arranging for the award ceremonies for the 1998 exemplary adult students held February 4, 1998 at the PAACE Midwinter Conference. A secondary goal was to prepare, publish, and disseminate the Success Stories Booklet featuring the ten outstanding ABLE students-of-the-year and their sponsoring programs as well as the eight previous award

winners. Promotional flyers depicting the stories of the 1998 award winners were also produced and distributed to their programs. To accomplish these goals the following objectives were stipulated.

1. Provide technical support in editing success stories nominations and making arrangements for recognition activities at the 1998 Midwinter Conference.
2. Feature ten outstanding students from 1998 and ten past winners in the Success Stories booklet.
3. Write, publish and disseminate the Success Stories booklet and local program flyers.
4. Evaluate Success Stories via surveys completed by the Success Stories panel, outstanding students' sponsors, and local program directors.

PROCEDURES

Success Stories Nominations and Outstanding Student Selection

The coordinator/editor revised the stories submitted to the Bureau of ABLE so that they were one-page double-spaced and did not include any indication of the adult learners' real names, program or locations. These nominations were submitted to PDE Bureau of ABLE in time for the Success Story Panel meeting in December 1997. The editor took part in the selection process as part of the Success Stories panel.

Panel members rated each candidate according to nine selection criteria and determined their top fifteen choices. The ten nominees receiving the highest number of panel member votes from among the top fifteen were chosen Outstanding Students. SUCCESS STORY winners for 1998 and their programs were:

April Pearson, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council;
Lidia Bogush, Reading Area Community College;
Carlos Barreto, Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5;
Linda Brown, Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley;
Nikiki Blake, Wilkes University Literacy Corps;
June M. Fink, Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18;
Theresa Banford, Community Learning Center;
Carmen Feliciano Nunez, The Lighthouse Adult Education Program;
Mary Vinzulis, Community College of Philadelphia ABE Program;
and Itavia Wilson, Center for Literacy, Inc.

To fulfill the objective of honoring previous outstanding ABLE learners, the coordinator/ editor contacted agencies who had sponsored Success Stories Students from 1985 to 1996 and inquired as to whether they maintained contact with these students and were willing to prepare an update on their former students' achievements since receiving their awards. Agencies with 1998 Success Stories students were not asked to participate in this review of past award winners since part of the intent was to feature as many different ABLE programs as possible. Eight agencies responded and the following past winners and their agencies were featured in the 20th anniversary booklet:

David Wolfe, a 1994 graduate of the Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4 ABE/GED Program and currently a Charter School teacher;

Bonnie Starcher, a 1988 Graduate of Penncrest School District ABE/GED Program and currently a businesswoman;

Bertha Beard, a 1990 graduate of the Adult Learning Center, School District of Erie and currently a community leader;

Martin Finsterbusch, a 1986 graduate of Delaware County Literacy Council and currently a New Reader advocate;

Sue Virgili, a 1996 graduate of IU 1 Adult Learning Center, Unionville, and currently a graduate student in the communications program at California University of Pennsylvania.

Khom Tuy, a 1992 graduate of the Adult Enrichment Center, Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13, and currently a US citizen and home owner;

Rudy Kancianic, a 1985 graduate of Eagleville Hospital Education Program and currently a registered nurse;

and Steven Parker, a 1991 graduate of Inglis House and currently a college graduate and author.

Preparation for Midwinter Conference and Midwinter Conference Activities

Once the 1998 award winners were selected, the editor contacted program sponsors and asked them to take pictures of their student. She gave them copies of their student's story as revised for the *Legislative Luncheon Booklet* and the *Success Stories Booklet* and requested that students made corrections, deletions and additions to these stories before they were released to the general public. Sponsors provided information to their students about Midwinter Conference procedures and student responsibilities therein. They handed out expense sheets for student travel and collected the information necessary for the project coordinator to make arrangements for their students' lodging.

The project coordinator also reserved seating at the Legislative Luncheon for outstanding students and their families as well as for program staff and legislators. Sponsors wrote the insert featuring their programs that appeared in the Success Stories booklet. In programs where experienced sponsors were not available, Frank Nardone and Jean Fleschute acted as field managers and worked with program directors to perform the same tasks. Former Success Stories students' program directors also supplied stories and photographs to be included in the 1998 Success Stories booklet.

The 1998 outstanding students' photographs were mounted for display at the general registration area at Midwinter Conference. Following a luncheon attended by students, program staff, state staff, legislators and PAACE officers, the outstanding students told their stories at a special session. Each student received a certificate and plaque from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of ABLE and a savings bonds from the Dauphin Deposit Bank. Informal photographs were taken during the luncheon and at the awards ceremony and a group picture was taken following the luncheon.

Preparation and Dissemination of Publications

The *Legislative Luncheon Booklet*, which contained short versions of ABLE outstanding students stories, was reviewed and corrected by students. It was then prepared by the project editor and distributed at Midwinter Conference. The *Success Stories Booklet* including the students' stories and the programs' inset were sent for approval to PDE's public relations department in March. They were returned with completed corrections the last week in May. All print material was prepared copy-ready at the Royce & Royce office using a computer, scanner, typewriter, Xerox and laser printer supplied by Royce & Royce.

Letters that accompany the booklet were secured from the Director of the Bureau of ABLE. Due to the late release of copy from the public relations department, the Success Stories booklet was not published until the week of June 22nd and mailed on June 29, 1998. On that same day, 200 Flyers containing each student's story and contact information were sent to each local program.

OBJECTIVES MET

1. Provide technical support in editing success stories nominations and making arrangements for recognition activities at the 1998 Midwinter Conference. **Completed satisfactorily**

2. Feature ten outstanding students from 1998 and ten past winners from 1978 to 1997 in the Success Stories booklet.

   Modified and completed satisfactorily. Only eight agencies who did not have 1998 outstanding adult learners responded to the project director's request for information about previous award winners. Therefore, eight instead of ten previous past winners were featured in the 1998 Success Stories booklet.

3. Write, publish and disseminate the Success Stories booklet and local program flyers. **Completed satisfactorily**.

4. Evaluate Success Stories via surveys completed by the Success Stories panel, outstanding students' sponsors, and local program directors. **Completed satisfactorily**.

NEGATIVE RESULTS

All objectives were completed satisfactorily. There were no unexpected or negative results from this project.

EVALUATION

The Panel Survey

Success Stories panel members were asked to complete a Panel Survey (See Appendix A) and all agreed that: 1) nominators provided information in keeping with the guidelines, 2) stories were handled in an evenhanded manner. Although there was general agreement that the information supplied was sufficient to select ten outstanding ABLE students, comments indicated that "this year was very homogenized and therefore rather hard to select enough." While the process was praised as "great," one panelist suggested that a story should not be "qualified," if it does not include "all" the criteria against which the stories are scored.

The Sponsor Survey

A Sponsor's Survey (See Appendix A) was circulated to award winner's sponsors asking them to indicate their satisfaction with conference arrangements and to list the local activities they engaged in as part of the Success Stories Project. The results were as follows:

Project Director Comments:

All but one program director expressed satisfaction with the conference arrangements and the prompt payment for expenses incurred at Midwinter Conference. That program director listed insufficient tables at the luncheon. Other comments included:

"Event was very positive and a great success. Nikiki was so excited to be chosen."

"A very good job! Carlos was so proud of his achievement and the way the arrangements were handled."

Local Recognition Activities sponsored by programs:

Contact with student's family	100%	
Contact with student's employer	50%	(Four students were not employed)
Contact with community agencies	100%	
Contact with local government	75%	
Contact with state legislators	80%	
Media Contact	100%	(See Appendix A)
Local celebration	75%	
Other Visited GED Classes		
Citywide celebration	25%	

Program directors mentioned:

A reception for Linda Brown award winner attended by local and state officials, board members and students and a city proclamation naming the day of the reception in her honor.

Recognition at Walmart, Carlos' place of business, newspaper coverage on three different occasions, and a celebration attended by local agency personnel as well as teacher's and students.

Frontpage color photo article on Lydia Bogus plus a plaque presented to her at RACC graduation ceremonies.

Dissemination of the Product

Some 1,250 copies of SUCCESS STORIES: Partners for Progress were distributed to all PDE Bureau of ABLE programs and special projects, ABLE special task forces, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) programs, and advocates of adult education in the Commonwealth. In addition, all members of the Pennsylvania legislature and all Pennsylvania members of the US Congress received the Booklet as well as state departments of adult education, and adult education national and regional clearinghouses.

Each award winning adult learner and their program director received five copies of the Success Stories Booklet. The programs also received 200 promotional flyers featuring their student

Ten copies of SUCCESS STORIES Students and Teachers were distributed to each of Pennsylvania's Adult Education Professional Development Centers and 20 copies went to the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center and to AdvancE, Pennsylvania's ABLE clearinghouse One hundred copies were held in reserve for field testing with adult learners as part of the FY1998-99 Success Stories project Five hard copies of the Final Report and products and three 3 5 high density disks containing the Final Report were provided to the PDE Bureau of ABLE

APPENDIX A

SUCCESS STORIES Panel's Survey

For purposes of contract evaluation, it would be most valuable for me to have your feedback regarding the Success Stories editing process. Would you please complete the checklist below and return it to me before leaving today.

Success Stories Editing

	YES	NO	SEE COMMENTS
Nominators provided information in keeping with guidelines.			
Stories were treated in an evenhanded manner.			
Information supplied was sufficient for me to select 10 outstanding ABLE students.			

Comments (OPTIONAL):

Thank you for your help in this matter.

SJR/hs

Sherry Royce,
Project Director
SUCCESS STORIES 1998

SUCCESS STORIES : Sponsor's Survey

	YES	NO	SEE COMMENTS
1. Conference arrangements were handled efficiently.			
2. Payment for expenses incurred at Midwinter Conference was prompt.			

Conference evaluation of services

We engaged in the following ***SHARING STUDENT SUCCESS*** *local activities:*

	YES	NO	SEE COMMENTS
1. Contact with student's family			
2. Contact with student's employer			
3. Contact with community agencies			
4. Contact with local government			
5. Contact with state legislators			
6. Media Contact [list and describe below]			
7. Local celebration			
8. Other. [List and describe below]			

Local activities section

comments:

Director's Name and Program _____ **Date:**_____

Please complete and mail to **Sherry Royce, 1938 Crooked Oak Drive, Lancaster, PA 17601** by March 6, 1998.

CELEBRATIONS

Literacy Council part of her recipe for success

By Jennifer Kissel

V.W.H. Campbell/Post-Gazette

ona, who has been named one of 10 Outstanding
n Students of the Year in the state, is trapped in her
ags from a monthly shopping trip to feed herself
rson's goal in life is to own a restaurant.

Cooking is her passion and her children are her love. Without either, April Pearson might have remained on the welfare roles.

Instead, she cooked up a recipe to improve her life.

In November 1996, with the goal of becoming a chef and restaurant owner, Pearson put her education on the front burner and sought assistance from the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council to prepare for taking the GED. It was her first step down the road toward success.

At an awards luncheon last Wednesday in the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Pearson was recognized as one of 10 Outstanding Adult Basic Education Students of the Year in the state. The luncheon was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education. Carlos Barreto of Erie County and Pearson were Western Pennsylvania's only recipients.

The awards are given annually to adults who overcome challenges to obtain a basic education. For her perseverance and dedication to her goals, Pearson was nominated by Shirley Derbis, North Hills Area coordinator of the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, Donald Block, executive director of the GPLC, and her tutors, Jill Brethauer and Nancy Palmer.

Pearson, a 33-year-old single mother from Verona, said her children provided her with the motivation.

"I started thinking about how welfare continues through generations," said Pearson, as she unpacked the 30-plus bags of groceries it takes to feed her family each month. "My main goal was to help my kids. I want them to be proud of me, so that when I speak to them [of doing something], I'm also doing it."

As a representative on the Head Start Policy Council at the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center Inc. in Dorseyville, Indiana Township, where two of her children attended preschool, Pearson met some other women who wanted their GEDs. With the help of Marian Sellers, family support specialist in the center, Pearson contacted the GPLC.

"When I tested April, she was insecure and doubted her abilities," said Derbis. Soon, two tutors were working with the women twice weekly in math and English. "Being in the group raised April's confidence level. Now all the good in her has risen to the top," Derbis said.

The women's hunger for learning was so strong they requested double helpings, and soon attended classes four times weekly. A third tutor was added to work with them on science and social studies.

When Head Start closed for the summer, Pearson and another student located a class site near her home in which the tutors could continue to work with the women. Ten months after beginning the tutoring sessions, Pearson passed her GED with a score of 286. The minimum passing score is 225.

"During that year, I started to enjoy learning," Pearson said. "When I started out, I hated math. Now I love it, and I love literature."

Derbis said that three GPLC volunteers gave a combined 260-plus hours to help April reach her goal.

"The whole thing was a great collaborative effort between the council, GPLC and April," Brethauer said. "It shows that a lot of people working toward the same goal can get results. April has the gumption to get things done."

Passing the GED was the first of several ingredients in Pearson's recipe for success. She immediately re-enrolled in the food-service training program at Connelley Technical Institute, Uptown. She had withdrawn because she would need her GED to graduate from the program. Five days a week, Pearson made the long commute by public transportation. For nine hours a day, she was away from her children.

Pearson graduated last month from Connelley.

Although she passed the math section of the GED, Pearson was not satisfied with her math proficiency. She continues to work with a tutor twice weekly, focusing on the math involved in cooking large quantities of food.

"My goal is to own a restaurant," said Pearson, pausing to inspect a sea bass she bought for a special dinner. "Right now, I just want the opportunity to work under a chef."

For practice, Pearson said she caters the meals for the Head Start policy council meetings. For inspiration, she scours her pile of tattered cookbooks.

Joining Pearson at the awards ceremony in Hershey were her children, Lamare 18, DeShawn 16, Brandon 9, Armond 5 and April 3, and her mother, Charlotte Pearson, 53, of Garfield. Sellars, Block, Derbis, Brethauer and Palmer also made the trip to celebrate with their prize pupil.

Cheryl Keenan, director of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education in the state Department of Education, introduced the award winners and presented each student with a wall plaque, a congratulatory letter from Sen. Jay Costa Jr., D-Forest Hills, and an official proclamation from the state legislature. Each student gave a brief acceptance speech at the afternoon "Success Stories" session.

"April is so conscientious and dedicated," Derbis said. "Her belief in God and her children motivate her. She knows there's a better life for them, and she'll do what it takes to get there."

During a visit to her daughter's home, Charlotte Pearson held up April's engraved plaque and smiled. "I'm proud of my daughter. She's always loved to cook, and now she's on her way. In fact, I think I'll take this plaque home with me – I taught her all she knows," she said with a laugh.

Pearson said she doesn't know what the fuss is about.

"I thank God for the position He has put me in," she said. "It's overwhelming how many good things have happened to me in the past year."

For Pearson, being named an Outstanding Student of the Year is icing on the cake.

Adults seeking tutoring or those interested in volunteering can contact the GPLC at 412-661-7323.

Jennifer Kissel is a free-lance writer living in Reserve.

Have you celebrated a joyous event in an unusual way? Gotten engaged while climbing Everest or married canoeing down the Ohio, for example? If so, drop us a line (or drop the dime on a friend) and we'll consider featuring your story in this space above our Celebrations package each Tuesday.

Send your stories to: Pete Zapadka, Features Dept., Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 34 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.

These stories do not replace the classified announcements in Celebrations, so for information about how to use that space, call 263-1236.

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Community Learning Center's Student Newsletter

2801 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19134-4096 215-426-7940 Spring 1998

Former CLC Student Graduates Cum Laude from Temple University and Wins State Award

CARL WOLF STUDIO, INC

Theresa M. Banford

Community Learning Center (CLC) is proud to announce that one of its former students, Theresa M. Banford, graduated cum laude from Temple University on May 21, 1998, with a bachelor's degree in social administration. In the fall, Terry will enter Temple's master's program in social work, and she has won a Merit Scholarship to help her through graduate school. Terry wants a career that will allow her to advance the rights of the poor by building family support systems.

In addition, Terry was recently selected by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as one of the top ten Outstanding Adult Basic and Literacy Education Students for 1998. Terry was honored in early February, along with nine other outstanding adults, at a legislative luncheon in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Jean L. Fleschute, executive director of CLC and Terry's former GED teacher, introduced Terry to an audience of dignitaries, family members, friends, and educators. In her introduction, Fleschute referred to a poem by Sonia Sanchez, entitled "Woman," which expresses the desire to "rediscover me, the secret of me" in a woman's journey of self-discovery. Fleschute said that Ms. Banford struggled through her own journey of self-discovery in her transitions from a GED student to a community college student to a university graduate.

Terry's story is indeed impressive. Dropping out of the eleventh grade to marry Anthony, her high school sweetheart, Terry spent the next 20 years raising children and occasionally working as a seamstress. Then, on August 28, 1992, Anthony, died unexpectedly of a massive heart attack. Terry, age 37, was suddenly a widow with four school-aged children to support—Theresa, 17; Melissa, 15; Anthony, Jr., 12; and Victoria, 8. Without a high school diploma, Terry could do no better than her five-dollar-an-hour seamstress job.

Feeling as if she had hit rock bottom, Terry sought therapy and learned that she had long neglected herself while enabling others. Her counselor asked, "What are you going to do for yourself?" and suggested that Terry return to school.

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Dear Gabby...

Please send your questions and comments to "Dear Gabby" in care of your CLC teacher.

Dear Gabby,

I've been having trouble with my 16-year old son. He has been getting into trouble with the law and not listening to what I tell him. If he doesn't get his act together, he might have to face up to two years in juvenile hall. I feel like I can't take it anymore. Sometimes I just want to ignore the whole situation and leave, but I can't seem to do that. I love him too much to let go. I'm also responsible for him until he's 18, which I don't think would make a difference; he will always be my responsibility for as long as I live. What can I do to make the situation better for me and my son? When is the right time to let go?

Sincerely yours,
Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

First of all, it is hard to control a 16-year old, and you are in a difficult situation, especially because the law is now involved. You need to look at this situation in two ways: You have an immediate problem that requires you to act quickly, and you must also look at the broader picture.

You need to seek professional advice and support ***immediately*** *as you want to forestall any further damage. Approach your child's high school guidance counselor for suggestions about what to do. Also, contact your community mental health center. Ask these experts for suggestions to help both you and your son. Perhaps they could assist you in finding an appropriate parent support group.*

Acting quickly will show your child that you are taking the situation seriously and that you want to prevent him from causing further harm to himself. Your quick actions will also demonstrate to him your love and concern. Working with professionals over an extended period will help you and your son work on issues, which will improve your long-term relationship and help your son to stay out of trouble.

Your son is still young, so you ***are*** *responsible for him both legally and morally. Eventually, when he's old enough, you will have to let go. Learning to let go is a process that takes time. It is something that all parents have to do, even if their child is not acting out. Letting go is a normal part of parenting, difficult for most of us.*

Sincerely,
Gabby

Continued from front page ...

In January of 1993, five months after her husband's death, a frustrated Terry called CLC and talked her way into one of their already-filled classes. By June, with CLC's help, Terry completed her high school equivalency diploma (GED), won a $500 Women in Education scholarship for college, and registered at Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). In May of 1995, she graduated from CCP with a 3.7 grade-point average, earning an associate's degree. Terry was listed in the *Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges.*

In addition to attending college full-time and raising four children, Terry works as a case manager at CLC. Terry says that she enjoys working with adult learners, helping them to turn their lives around, offering them the perspective of someone who has been through the same program and on the same path. Further, Terry volunteers as a liaison for students making the transition from CCP to Temple University. She also contributes hours to her church, sewing baptismal robes, and she chaperones dances at her daughter Victoria's school.

Terry's accomplishments are especially noteworthy considering that she came from a broken home that placed no emphasis on education. The oldest of six, Terry was the family caretaker. Just three siblings graduated from high school. Why Terry excels in her ability to help herself and others has to do with her feelings about the power of education. Speaking at a recent CLC board meeting, Terry asserted, "Education changes everything that we do and everything that we are."

TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Division of Adult Basic & Literacy Education
Outstanding Adult Students

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Tom Ridge, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Eugene W. Hickok, Secretary

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE)
Cheryl Keenan, Director

SUCCESS STORIES SELECTION COMMITTEE
Frank Paul, Instructor
Red Land Community Action Program

Peggy Greene, Instructor
Harrisburg State Hospital

Caroline Henry, Director ABE
Harrisburg Area School District

Cheryl Harmon, Resource Specialist
Clearinghouse AdvancE

John Heisey, Supervisor
Lebanon Adult Learning Center

Lyn Leto
Schuylkill IU #29
Lifelong Learning Center

Ella M. Morin, Division Chief Special Programs
PDE Bureau of ABLE

Cynthia Presley, Vice President,
Community Relations Officer
Dauphin Deposit Bank

Sherry Royce, Project Director
Success Stories

Michael Wilson, Adult Literacy
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16

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PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Dear Reader:

With this publication, SUCCESS STORIES: Partners for Progress, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is proud to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Success Stories, the stories of Pennsylvania's adult learners who have discovered that education can help them to achieve their goals. These stories celebrate the learners' perseverance and accomplishments and teachers' dedication and effectiveness as they work together in cooperative partnerships that represent the best adult education practice.

These individuals represent the thousands of adult learners in Pennsylvania who enroll each year in educational programs to reach new and higher goals for themselves. By recognizing the power and importance of education in their lives, they enhance the quality of their lives and those of their families and their communities through educational achievement. Their commitment to the accomplishment of their goals, their hard work and their perseverance serve as examples to all of us. They cannot do the work alone, however. It takes all of us to support them — local education providers, family members, employers and the entire community. It is fitting, therefore, that all of us in the Commonwealth join in supporting adult literacy and offer encouragement to all adult learners by acknowledging their achievements. When learners reach their goals, we all share in those accomplishments.

The stories in this publication describe the accomplishments of some of the many adult learners across the Commonwealth. Their stories will encourage you to support adult learners and adult literacy programs in your area. Just as these individuals met and overcame many challenges to their learning, we can meet and overcome the challenges to achieving a literate adult population. Truly, adult learning is a goal for us all.

Sincerely yours,

Cheryl Keenan

Cheryl Keenan, Director
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education

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PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

David Wolfe

Charter School Teacher

county:
Butler County

program:
Midwestern
ntermediate Unit 4
ABE/GED Program

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV encompasses Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties for a service area of 1,600 square miles. For the past 30 years, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV has been a provider of Adult Basic Education, serving an average of 400 adults yearly. Its ABE program strives to provide a significant impact on the educational and employment opportunities for area participants. The program offers basic educational skills and career counseling to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and advancement. Eighteen state-certified teachers and counselors, with an average of 10 years of adult education experience, provide relevant education aligned with the individual's academic, employment and personal goals in relaxed, small-group classrooms throughout the community.

Class of
1994

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

When David Wolfe received his Student of the Year award at the 1994 PAACE Midwinter Conference, he told those in the audience about his mission: "To give all the positive reinforcement I can to anyone trying to better themselves." He talked about his plan for success, which included: 1) setting goals you believe in; 2) maintaining a positive attitude; and 3) the need for lots of hard work and determination.

After getting the GED and earning an education degree at Slippery Rock University with a social studies certification, David had accomplished enough for Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV to sponsor him as one of Pennsylvania's outstanding adult student success stories. Naturally, David Wolfe has not stopped achieving. He has secured a full-time, high school social studies teaching position with at-risk students; continues to work part-time as an ABE/GED instructor, and has initiated a yearly achievement/recognition ceremony for ABE/GED students. David is a member of an EQUAL team, was a Western Pennsylvania Field Manager for the Success Stories project, and recently served on the APEX Blue Ribbon Panel to define criteria for the ABLE Practitioner Excellence Awards.

During FY 1996-97, David enrolled 67 ABE students at his class site, with 72 percent of them exceeding 50 hours of instruction. He has attended three PAACE Midwinter conferences and was a presenter at Midwinter in 1996. He is a lifelong learner who has averaged 30 hours per year in adult continuing education. David also serves on the Board of Directors for the Keystone Music Association, ran for township supervisor, and managed a political campaign for a candidate for state office.

David lives in Harrisville, PA with his wife, Cindy, and daughters, Kristen and Andrea. He teaches full-time at Keystone Charter School in Greenville, PA, and part-time for Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in Grove City, PA. He has finally obtained good medical insurance after ten years with no coverage and has taken a long-overdue vacation. It's hard to imagine that twenty years ago, he was labeled as a "bad kid with a lousy attitude who frequently slept when he even bothered to come to school." David Wolfe always has an enthusiastic smile and is always ready to get involved in helping and enabling others. He makes a meaningful difference as he turns potential into achievement one student at a time.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Bonnie Starcher
Businesswoman

county:
Crawford County

program:
PENNCREST School District
ABE/GED Program

PENNCREST School District

The PENNCREST School District adult education classes have been serving Crawford County adults for the past 28 years. During this time, thousands of adult learners have benefited from the program. PENNCREST was one of the first adult education programs in the state to offer the actual school district diploma for adults who attended 100 hours of classes and passed the GED test. PENNCREST has also provided basic skills classes to enable adults functioning at a lower level the opportunity to improve their basic skills. This program uses adult materials and curriculum directed to the individual needs of the student. One of the greatest strengths of the PENNCREST program is its dedicated teachers; two of the teachers have been involved with the program for over 20 years. The other four teachers have over 10 years experience. Their dedication and understanding of the adult learner has enhanced the program. The school board and administration have been great boosters of the adult education program; the superintendent and secondary curriculum director along with a number of board members visit the program on a regular basis and participate in the graduation ceremony. They believe that the PENNCREST School District provides an important community service by educating not only the children in the community, but every person that seeks a better future.

Class of
1988

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Bonnie (Starcher) Chamberlain has continued her success story in the ten years since she was a Success Stories winner. Her association with PENNCREST did not end with her graduation from the adult education program. A few years after completing the program, Bonnie and her family moved back into the PENNCREST district and she enrolled her two children in the PENNCREST school system. Kody, her youngest child, was receiving learning support services, and Bonnie fought to ensure that he would receive the very best education available. She worked with him helping him overcome many of his academic problems. Her daughter, Jammie, was doing very well in school. If a problem did arise, Bonnie was eager to help find a solution.

Bonnie is now employed by the Springs Body Shop Supplies in Cambridge Springs as a sales representative. This job involves extensive travel to a variety of shops in her selling territory. She analyzes the needs of each business, then suggests a variety of products that would fulfill those needs. Yet, realizing the importance of keeping up to date in the business world, she has attended a variety of computer and keyboarding classes. She still uses the philosophy that "you're never too old to learn" and puts it into place in her job.

Bonnie loves to read and do ceramics in her spare time. Her free time is limited by her dedication to her children and family. She spends many evenings helping her children with homework and making sure that they realize the importance of a good education.

When her father became terminally ill with cancer, she took him into her home. She knew that it might be difficult for the children, but she felt that she could provide the support and care that her father needed. "I've always felt it was important to help people, and who is more important than your own family?" Bonnie believes that the difficult lessons that will be shared by the family during this crisis will create an even stronger bond. When PENNCREST nominated Bonnie in 1978, they were not only moved by what she had already overcome, but also impressed by the goals she set for herself. Bonnie seemed to understand that hard times can always occur, and the only way to get through them is by digging in your heels and fighting back. Bonnie Chamberlain is a success story that continues to grow.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Bertha Beard

Community Leader

county:
Erie County

program:
Adult Learning Center
School District of the City of Erie

Class of
1990

Erie Adult Learning Center

Sponsored by the School District of the City of Erie, the Erie Adult Learning Center has been providing Adult Basic, GED and ESL instruction to the citizens of Erie county for over 29 years. During this time, over 26,000 students have attended classes and over 3,100 of them have earned their GED diploma. The Adult Learning Center offers morning and afternoon classes in English, writing skills, reading, general math, algebra, science, social studies and five levels of ESL. In addition to its ABE/GED/Basic Literacy/ ESL programs at Hamilton School, it also conducts satellite programs at Central High School, Harbor Homes Public Housing development, The Booker T. Washington Center, the Erie County Prison, and Crossroads Hall, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center. In addition, it is engaged in the Step-Up education and job training partnership program with other community agencies and the Adult Literacy Corps tutoring program with Penn State and Gannon Universities.

Each year, the Adult Learning Center serves over 1,200 students and helps over 100 students pass the GED exam. Clients come with a wide range of needs and abilities and receive instruction in a number of ways. GED, Algebra and ESL classes are conducted as small learning groups. Reading, writing, and basic math classes are individualized to allow for multilevel instruction. Volunteer tutors supplement teachers and give the program the ability to provide one-to-one instruction for those most in need. Students can also take advantage of many educational programs available on computers.

A recognized leader of Adult Basic Education in the Erie area, former Governor Robert Casey cited the Erie Adult Learning Center as one of the outstanding programs in the Commonwealth in 1992 and in 1996, the Center was awarded a grant from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one of only six awards in the nation.

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

For Bertha Beard, it all began with her GED. After leaving school in 7th grade to work, marry and raise her eight children, Bertha finally had an opportunity to continue her education at the Erie Adult Learning Center. In 1978, she began ABE classes. It was not easy; her youngest child was still in diapers. Bertha secured daycare for him by volunteering her time after school hours at a day-care center. After two long years, she earned her GED in December 1979. Finally, she had her diploma and she had gained something equally important, self esteem and confidence. The teachers at the Booker T. Washington daycare center were impressed by Bertha's ability and encouraged her to pursue a career with the Head-Start program. Starting as a substitute, she worked her way up to be an assistant teacher.

At 48, with faith, determination and family support, she purchased a vacant church and started her own parish, the Blessed Hope Seventh Day Christian Church. While continuing her education by taking courses in Early Childhood Development at Edinboro University, she opened a daycare center at the church which provided daily services for 30 children. She then purchased a summer camp in the country and initiated a summer day-camp program for children to keep them out of crime-infested streets and give them a positive alternative. Her next project involved joining two adjacent houses, renovating the structures and opening the Gateway Community Center as a "safe harbor" for children. For this woman of strong faith, determination, and sense of community, it all started with her GED.

Bertha Beard was named an Outstanding Adult Student of the Year in 1990 for her active involvement in these community projects. Now, in 1998, at 65 years of age, she is retired ("on paper") but just as actively involved as she was eight years ago. She still operates the Blessed Hope Daycare Center and the Gateway Center. The Gateway Center provides a site for homework tutoring, Girl Scout meetings, fellowship, and adult basic education classes. Many of these programs receive very little government funding and are basically self-supporting. Bertha plans to continue her community service work as long as she can. She feels very strongly that people, especially children, need encouragement to improve their lives.

Bertha has eight children of her own, all a living testimony to her philosophy that encouragement leads to success. Among the professions her own children have chosen are lawyer, dentist, state policeman, corporate executive, realtor and social worker. Bertha continues to be a "Success Story" every day of her life, encouraging people, especially children, to dare to dream and to believe that they can achieve their goals.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Martin Finsterbusch

New Reader Advocate

county:
Delaware County

program:
Delaware County Literacy Council

Delaware County Literacy Council

More than 20 percent of American adults can not read at the 4th grade level, and nearly 50 percent can not read at the 8th grade level. The problem is not confined to Appalachia or urban areas. Adults with low-level reading skills can be of any ethnic background and can be found in cities, rural areas and small towns in every region of the country. Pennsylvania's literacy rates are on par with the nation's, and Delaware County's situation matches the state's.

This parallel illuminates the breadth and depth of Delaware County Literacy Council's mission. A diverse region, the county encompasses an urban area fallen on hard times (Chester), small boroughs and townships (Collingdale, Prospect Park, Morton, etc.), as well as wealthier sections of Philadelphia's suburbs (Radnor, Haverford, etc.). The council holds classes in every region, and instructs students from every township (core than 700 students total) in the county.

In 1997, 338 volunteers and 641 adult students accumulated more than 21,500 tutoring hours. Working and learning as a team, they achieved retention and progress rates above the national average. DCLC students also participate in board, staff, advocacy and student support activities, and the council's professional staff provides training, testing and curriculum training. Together, students, volunteer tutors and staff strive to accomplish the mission of the volunteers who formed the literacy council in 1975 to bring adult education within walking distance of the county residents who need and want to improve their literacy skills.

Class of
1986

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Martin Finsterbusch, Jr. was named an Outstanding Adult Basic Education student in 1986 in recognition of the tortuous path he had to follow to improve his reading ability. He overcame an auditory disability, the resultant speech problem and learning disability, and the debilitating stigma of entering adulthood with poor literacy skills. But far from resting on his laurels, Marty has devoted his efforts in the ensuing decade to the task of helping new readers empower themselves. Much of Marty's strength as a literacy advocate and lobbyist stems from his own successes. In 1986, he had just started to work towards an associate's degree in applied science, hotel and restaurant management from Delaware County Community College. In 1995, he graduated with honors. At work, he has been promoted from head breakfast cook to dining services manager.

His accomplishments as a national literacy advocate are remarkable. After first attending the Laubach Literacy Association (LLA) Biennial Conference as a delegate in 1986, he returned as a presenter at subsequent conferences. He also served as new reader chairman, co-planner, and presenter at LLA Northeast Regional Conferences. Between 1987 and 1993, he wore several hats, co-creator, planner, facilitator, steering committee member and presenter, while helping to establish the National Adult Literacy Congress. At the state level, he has served as board member for the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Literacy and has read proposals for the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Through his involvement with Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (TLC) and his liaison with regional new reader representatives, he spearheaded the creation of a statewide new reader literacy network. As an adult student advocate, he served on LLA's Steering Committee for six years, chaired the Student Gathering Planning Committee, and gave a keynote address about new reader involvement at the 1990 United Nations National Conference.

The most significant outcome of Marty's association with TLC was its co-sponsorship of the 1997 New Reader Conference. Marty was honored at the 1996 LLA National Conference for his years of dedication to and involvement in literacy.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Sue Virgili
Graduate Student

county:
Fayette County

program:
Intermediate Unit 1
Adult Learning Center,
Uniontville

The Intermediate Unit I Adult Learning Center

The Intermediate Unit I Adult Learning Center has been in operation since 1972 and serves approximately 500 students annually. As the primary program for 13 other educational satellite sites in Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties, the Center provides extensive instructional, career awareness, and assessment services. It offers literacy instruction, adult basic education, GED preparation, and English as a Second Language. The JTPA and School-to-Work programs give students the opportunity to learn in-depth employability skills.

The staff is comprised of two full-time professional adult educators, three part-time instructors, a certified counselor, and trained literacy volunteers who devote their efforts toward low-level learners. In order to foster the growth and development of the whole student, a curriculum tailored to the individual needs and abilities of each student is developed. Basic skills are taught within a context of relevant and meaningful information and instructors assist students to apply these skills to different contexts through practice. The corresponding outcome is that the adults become independent, self-directed learners.

Program services include open enrollment, diagnostic and placement testing, GED testing, flexible scheduling, career exploration and counseling, academic counseling, referrals to local agencies, strong student/teacher interaction, team teaching and computer-assisted instruction. In order to facilitate fluid transition from GED into employment, training, or college, the staff of this community-based organization nurtures strong working relationships with community linkages such as the Job Center, County Assistance Office, child care centers, schools, business-education consortium, counseling services, and numerous other agencies.

Class of
1996

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

More than 22 years ago, Sue Virgil dropped out of high school in her junior year. In the spring of 1990, after attending classes at the Adult Learning Center in Uniontown, she passed her GED test and enrolled at California University of Pennsylvania. Juggling her educational goals with volunteer and family responsibilities as a wife and mother of six sons, Sue earned a bachelor of arts degree with honors in Communication Studies in May, 1994. While working as an outreach specialist for the Community Action Southwest Women's, Infants' and Children's (WIC) Program, she revised the WIC bimonthly newsletter, lowering its average reading level from a grade level of 14 to a more appropriate level of grade eight. In 1996, the Pennsylvania Department of Adult Education recognized her as one of ten outstanding adult students.

Currently enrolled in California University of Pennsylvania's master's degree program in communications, Sue will graduate in May after completing her thesis on the role of women in movies and the images they project. Her assistantship at the university involves doing voice-overs, writing commercials, and working on the Monongahela history project for the community. Last September, she was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as Literacy Delegate representing adult learners in Pennsylvania at the National Forum on Adult Education and Literacy. As a literacy advocate, Sue has met with both U.S. Senator Rick Santorum and U.S. Representative Frank Mascara and urged them to continue to support adult education and the reauthorization of the Adult Basic Education Act and the Adult Literacy Bill.

Through her efforts, she has taught her children the importance of a meaningful education. Her oldest son, Vito, holds an associate degree in computer-aided drafting. Sean is a special education teacher. Matthew holds specialist certificates in telecommunications and electronics from the U.S. Navy. Damian is a biology teacher. Adam is completing his junior year in college; and her youngest son, a junior in high school, plans to attend college and become an environmental science teacher. "If my life were a baseball game, I'd be batting a thousand," she comments. Sue speaks to classes at the Learning Center and was the key speaker at the GED graduation ceremony in February at SCI Waynesburg. She believes, "The educational roots that ABE provided have, through consistent nurturing, taken strong hold and have flourished into that beautiful blossom we call knowledge. And, knowledge is empowerment."

PAST
PROMISE
fulfilled

Khom Tuy

U.S. Citizen & Home Owner

county:
Lancaster County

program:
The Adult Enrichment Center
Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13

The Adult Enrichment Center Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13

The Adult Enrichment Center (AEC), part of Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, offers adult students the opportunity to improve basic skills in reading and math, and to study for the GED examination. The Center also provides ESL classes so that students can become proficient in the English language. With students representing many countries, the AEC offers a wealth of cultural diversity and an opportunity for individualized study in a supportive and caring atmosphere. In addition to GED and ESL instruction, Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13 also operates a successful workforce education program. Instruction is custom-designed to fit employee/employer needs. Other services provided by the Center include academic and vocational counseling; personal referrals relative to childcare, housing, medical care; and programs including study/work experience and employability skills/job placement.

Daytime and evening classes accommodate more than 2,000 students each year. It is the mission of the adult education program, in collaboration with the community, to provide a quality learning experience where adults can fulfill their educational goals with the guidance and support of professional adult educators. Operating since the mid 60's, it continually strives to enhance the program through systematic review and staff development designed to meet the changing needs of its students.

Class of
1992

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

When Khom Tuy was five, her family fled their farm in Cambodia to escape battling armies. They settled in Phnom Penh; and when the Khmer Rouge captured that city, Khom's mother left her with a babysitter. She later learned that her parents, two older brothers, and three of her sisters had been killed. She was taken to a Khmer Rouge refugee camp for children and required to work 12 to 18 hours a day. When Vietnam took over Cambodia, Khom was reunited with her foster mother. Together, she and her new family walked out of Cambodia across fields embedded with land mines. The family was held for six months in Thailand before being selected to come to the United States in 1979. Khom was 14 years old and had never been to school. Khom enrolled in public school in the United States. Two months before she was 16, she was forced to marry a man 13 years her senior. During the next 10 years, Khom had three children. Knowing she could not read or write, her husband chided her for her "stupidity" and tried to prevent her from going to church and to school. Khom, who had lived in fear all her life, decided she could not let her fear of her husband prevent her from changing her life. In the spring of 1989 when she enrolled in ABE classes at the Lancaster Adult Enrichment Center, she was illiterate in both English and Cambodian.

In September, supported by her church, teachers, fellow students and friends, she moved into a woman's shelter. In a few weeks she found an apartment for herself and her daughter. Despite having to work 60 hours a week at a physically demanding job, she attended ABE classes daily at the Adult Enrichment Center for five years. In 1992, Khom was named one of Pennsylvania's ten outstanding adult students.

Since then, Khom has bought a car, become a US citizen, and purchased her own home. She has also recently remarried. Khom received a promotion to inspector in the manufacturing facility where she has worked for the last nine years. Because her work schedule has changed, she attends evening GED classes. She has taken two of her GED tests and is preparing for the other three. Though she experienced the same frustrations of any beginning reader, she has never given up. Her success has been an inspiration to her friends, her teachers, and other students in the program. Khom's courage in the face of overwhelming adversity makes her a role model not only for fellow literacy students but for all Americans.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Rudy Kancianic

county:
Montgomery County

program:
Eagleville Hospital
Education Program

Eagleville Hospital, Montgomery County

Each of Eagleville Hospital's treatment programs is designed to treat addiction to drugs and/or alcohol while focusing on the medical and psychological complications which often accompany substance abuse. The staff recognizes the important connection between literacy, self-esteem and recovery. Through their experiences, they believe that newly recovering individuals who lack basic reading, writing and mathematical skills have a reduced chance of maintaining sobriety after leaving treatment. For many of Eagleville's patients, an early involvement with substance abuse caused a premature end to their formal education. Without the ability to go to school or qualify for a job to help make their lives meaningful and productive, recovering individuals are more susceptible to feelings of inadequacy that can cause relapse.

Eagleville Hospital's award-winning education program, which began in 1972, has helped over 500 patients obtain their GED and thousands more develop basic educational skills. Patients who participate in the Education Program accomplish a range of scholastic and therapeutic goals from the most basic reading and math skills to taking the GED test. Certified teachers and trained, dedicated volunteers provide one-on-one teaching sessions with students, supplying them with the tools to build a better future for themselves. Many students go on to receive high school diplomas and advanced degrees. The magnitude of these transformations has not gone unrecognized, as Eagleville's education program has consistently received statewide recognition from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the achievements of its adult learners.

Class of
1985

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

In 1981, Rudy Kanciamc entered Eagleville Hospital for long-term rehabilitation. Upon learning that the hospital had an ABE program, he coupled the goal of acquiring his GED along with the goal of attaining sobriety. Although there were days when concentration on school work was difficult, Rudy never lost sight of his goal and earned his GED in 1982 before leaving Eagleville. When he was nominated as an Outstanding Adult Student in 1985, Rudy was holding down a full-time job at the Montgomery County Geriatric Center where he worked in housekeeping. He was also enrolled in his first part-time semester at Montgomery County Community College. His original Success Story ended with a sentence that was indeed prophetic: "Today when one of his sons says, 'I want you to meet my father,' he has a father of whom he can be justifiably proud."

Rudy soon realized his true vocation was nursing. He entered the nursing program at the College, graduated in 1989, passed his Boards, and became an RN. Rudy then took a full time job as a staff nurse in the Montgomery County Nursing Home where he is still employed. Two years ago, Rudy was promoted and is now a Charge Nurse on a Skilled Unit of fifty residents. He supervises four other nurses and twelve aides.

Rudy's private life also saw many changes. His three sons from his first marriage have been raised by Rudy and his second wife, Paula. They have all finished high school and the two younger ones are college students. Rudy and Paula have a seven year old daughter who excels in school and shares a home filled with security and love. They have purchased a home in the area and appear to be typical suburbanites. Rudy spends his free time with his family or in a gymnasium where he maintains his health physically and mentally.

This is the 8th grade dropout who goofed off, lived on street corners, and spent his days shooting drugs and drinking. Eagleville helped Rudy to make some changes, and Rudy helped himself to a life of sobriety and success. He still encourages others with a similar addiction to follow the same recovery path he traveled. It has not been a smooth trip, but Rudy's strength of character and coping skills have helped pull him through. Today when his children say, "I want you to meet my father", they have a father of whom they can be justifiably proud.

PAST PROMISE *fulfilled*

Steven Parker

College Graduate & Author

county:
Philadelphia County

program:
Inglis House

Class of
1991

Inglis House, Philadelphia

Inglis House was founded in 1877 as a non-profit facility to serve people with chronic physical disabilities who need long-term care. Originally known as "The Philadelphia House for Incurables," it was first located in Southwest Philadelphia. Today, at its location in the Wynnefield section of the city, Inglis House is a unique wheelchair community serving over 350 adults with physical disabilities, ages 17 and older. Services include long-term care for 297 residents as well as day care for adults with disabilities who live at home and visit Inglis House on weekdays.

The Therapeutic Education Department of Inglis House is supported largely by federal and state funds provided by grants administered through the Bureau of ABLE of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Inglis House residents have had the opportunity to develop or continue academic educational pursuits for nearly twenty years. At present, the program offers Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, pre-GED and GED classes, Continuing Education I and II classes, and college courses where residents can achieve an associates degree in General Studies through the Community College of Philadelphia, or a bachelor of arts degree in Liberal Studies through Neumann College of Aston, Pennsylvania. P.A.L. (Partners in Adult Literacy) which serves both Inglis House residents and members of the community at large, and S.P.I.C.E. (Structured Program Incorporating Creative Experiences) are offered for residents with more severe physical disabilities.

Inglis House Education Department staff members strive to create an atmosphere where the best in adult education is provided through a friendly, supportive, and caring environment using small-group and one-on-one instruction. The operative philosophy is that every individual has the right to develop his/her potential to the fullest, and Inglis staff are committed to assisting residents to realize that potential.

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Born with cerebral palsy, Steven Parker went to a nursery school for special education children until he was six when he was placed in a special education class despite the fact that he was not retarded nor emotionally disturbed. At the age of 12, after his leg was amputated, his mother arranged for home tutoring and stressed the importance of education. When she and his siblings died in a trailer fire, he was placed in the Elizabethtown Hospital for Children and Youth, where he remained until the age of 20.

In 1976, Steven moved into Inglis House in Philadelphia. It took six years until he was ready to seek additional schooling. In 1982, he entered the ABE/GED class and something clicked, filling a great emptiness. In 1985, after intensive study, he passed the GED test. By 1991, when he was named an Outstanding Adult Student, Steven was well on his way to a college degree. He had earned 54 credits toward an associates degree in General Studies from the Community College of Philadelphia, maintained an average of 3.7, and was a member of the the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society.

Steven graduated from the Community College of Philadelphia in June of 1991 and enrolled in Neumann College to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies. Steven's intellectual pursuits and interests remain diversified and challenging. Always a voracious reader, his breadth of knowledge was in demand by his teachers and fellow students alike. He began to tutor his peers, write children's books and work on a novel about social injustice. His hard work, dedication, and intellectual drive came to fruition when he graduated *cum laude* from Neumann with his BA in 1998.

He credits the understanding of his professors as well as the flexibility of the programs in allowing him to get as far as he has. Given Steven's physical restraints, it would have been impossible for him to have attended college as a full-time student, but with his teachers' support and the part-time nature of the programs, he was able to complete his courses with a minimum of physical discomfort and distress.

Steven continues to produce prodigious amounts of poetry and has won three poetry contests at Inglis House. He is an active member of a newly formed poetry discussion group which not only examines the works of major, established writers, but also provides a forum for the participants to showcase their own work. He plans to continue to pursue his interests, to continue to satisfy his intellectual curiosity, and to never stop growing.

"Doing something different for myself was a chance to set an example for my children."

April Pearson

county:
Allegheny County

sponsor:
Donald G. Block

program:
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC) provides instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, GED preparation, English for foreign-born adults, job preparation skills, workplace literacy, and family literacy. In 1997, GPLC opened a learning center which uses the latest methods of computer-assisted instruction. At the present time, 750 students from Allegheny County are studying basic skills in instructional programs ranging from classes that meet three hours a week to those which meet 30 hours a week. The success of the program is measured by students' academic gains and life changes such as learners getting jobs and leaving the welfare rolls.

During the past three years, GPLC has been called on to be a site for national projects. The National Center for Family Literacy selected GPLC as one of 15 agencies in the nation for the Families for Learning project. The National Institute for Literacy and others chose GPLC as one of the four agencies in the nation to conduct a Literacy AmeriCorps project.

GPLC's philosophy is to help students set realistic short-term and long-term goals and work toward completion of those goals. Many students are taught in one-to-one tutorials, and others are in small groups of three to eight students. Instruction is individualized to meet the unique needs of each student. The Council has a professional staff of 30, and over 600 volunteers participate in the program.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

In 1980, at the age of 16, April Pearson dropped out of school. She had completed 8th grade and had just given birth to her first child. In 1985, she made an unsuccessful attempt to pass the GED test, but that failure did not deter her from pursuing her goals. While raising five children, she continued to focus on her goals of passing the GED and beginning a career. Since her husband is in prison, she must rely on her own skills and resources.

In November 1996, April enrolled at the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC). As a member of the policy council of the Dorseyville Head Start program, she took a leadership role in helping set up a GPLC class for Head Start parents. Furthermore, April requested additional hours when it appeared that two days per week of classes would not be sufficient for her and the other students to achieve their goals. She also located a class site when the Head Start program shut down over the summer.

In September, 1997, after attending class four days a week for 10 months, she passed the GED with a score of 286. April then enrolled in a food service training program at Connelley Technical Institute. Her studies and a very long commute by public transportation kept her away from her family for nine hours a day, five days a week. She persuaded her mother to live with her for the duration of her studies. She carefully prepared her children for the additional responsibilities they would have to share for her to make an improvement for their future. April believes her own education is directly linked to the future well-being of her children.

During the summer of 1997, April worked as the coordinator of the breakfast and lunch program for children in her subsidized housing community, Hutton Arbors. In performing her job, she demonstrated creativity and leadership and served as a good example to her neighbors. She was proud of the fact that she was studying for her GED and has promoted the adult education program to others. As a result of her efforts, four other residents of her housing community have enrolled in the program.

Although she passed the math section of the GED test with a score of 51, April was not satisfied with her math level. She contacted her tutor for additional help, and they continue to work together two days a week. They are focusing on the math that is involved in cooking large quantities of food.

April completed her food service training in December 1997, and hopes to secure a full-time job as a chef as soon as possible. At that point she will be happy to leave the welfare rolls. Her ultimate career goal is to open her own restaurant.

"America has provided the opportunity to fulfill my educational dreams."

Lidia Bogush

county:
Berks County

sponsor:
Mary Schmidt &
Sally Sinclair-Hubbard

program:
Reading Area
Community College

Reading Area Community College

The Literacy programs at Reading Area Community College (RAAC) serve over 2,000 students in 20 different locations throughout Berks County. Morning, afternoon and evening classes are offered to accommodate students' work and family schedules. Students can attend GED and ABE classes at any of four levels of instruction. ESL classes are available for beginning through advanced level students and an additional class is offered for college-bound ESL students.

RACC's Literacy programs attempt to merge academic needs with the needs of the community at large. Worksite GED and ESL classes are set up in response to the needs of local businesses. Family literacy classes which emphasize parenting skills and workplace skills along with child-parent activities and academic studies are run in conjunction with Even Start. RAAC also provides education for participating adults at Berks County Prison, Wernersville State Hospital, and the Teen Challenge Training Center.

Ever mindful of the need for improving the rate of retention, adult education teachers strive for ways to build a sense of community in the classroom while simultaneously striving to individualize instruction. In addition, The Volunteer Tutor Program has over 80 tutors helping more than 200 students each year in both classroom and one-on-one learning situations.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

After a 10 year struggle to leave Communist Romania with her husband and nine children, Lidia Bogush and her family arrived in the United States in 1991. The promise of a job for her husband never materialized, and the family found themselves on welfare. The following year brought another child. Then, Lidia suffered a serious stroke caused by the birth control treatment she received. She hadn't understood what she was being given because she didn't understand English.

After the stroke, Lidia was unable to speak, walk and think clearly. Her husband had to take care of her and the children while Lidia, who was very depressed, stayed in bed unable to do anything for her family. As she began to feel better, she started studying English by herself. After one year, she could read children's books in English.

She was determined to master this new language. In 1996, she registered for an ESL class at Reading Area Community College (RACC) and attended morning and afternoon sessions two days a week. Wanting more class time, she enrolled in a GED class that met twice a week. She raced through all her subjects, challenging her classmates to keep up the pace. To have more time to learn English, she spent another day at the Literacy Council in Reading.

In March, Lidia found herself in the hospital for five days, pregnant again, and in poor health. She came out of the hospital fighting to keep the baby and to keep up her studies. In September 1996, she passed the GED test. In October, she delivered her 11th child. In December, she was admitted to RACC to continue her education. With a full course load, her name has appeared on the Dean's List with GPA's of 3.89 and 3.90.

With her perseverance at school, her English has blossomed along with her self-esteem. Her husband supports her dreams by working a third-shift job so he can watch the children while she attends classes. Lidia is proud that she can help her children with their English grammar and other schoolwork. She has returned to her GED classroom to tell her story and encourage others. Her oldest daughter has followed in her footsteps as a part-time student while holding a full-time job. Lidia is happy that her experience has inspired her husband to learn more English.

Today, at age 41, she has the same dream that she had as a teenager in Romania. After finishing her studies, Lidia hopes to transfer to a four-year institution and continue her education in order to fulfill her dream of becoming a dentist.

*"It's never too late to learn.
It is not easy
but it is possible."*

Carlos Baretto

county:
Erie County

sponsor:
Bonnie Klan

program:
Northwest Tri-County
Intermediate Unit
Adult Education

Northwest Tri-County Intemediate Unit Adult Education

The Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 is a governmental entity created by the legislature to provide a wide range of educational and support services to local school districts within designated geographical areas. For the past 16 years, IU #5 has been providing adult basic and literacy education to adults who do not have basic reading, math, writing and English language skills. The adult education programs operated by the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit are organized so that they are reflective of the changing need within the area of workforce development. The focus of activities is to develop the learner's ability to utilize basic skills for employability.

Services provided include assessment, ABE, programs leading to a high school diploma or equivalency, employability classes, and ESL programs.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

A native of Puerto Rico, Carlos Baretto was 15 years old when his father abandoned the family. Carlos quit school and went to work to provide for his mother and three younger siblings. He worked as a laborer, a bodyguard, a security guard and an auto mechanic. He also spent 15 years as a professional wrestler until broken bones and a broken marriage ended his career.

When he moved to the United States in 1987, he found himself doing heavy farm labor, often working from 4:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. He realized that to improve life for himself and his family, he had to learn English. In January 1996, his brother-in-law told him about a neighborhood community center that offered ESL classes. That very day, Carlos enrolled at the Quality of Life Learning Center run by the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit. His ambition and eagerness sparked the entire class. He wrote lists of words he heard most often, looked them up in his dictionary and studied them at home. Two years later, these lists are still being used by others in the ESL classroom. His quest to learn the fine points of English grammar raised the level of the class, sending his teacher to textbooks to answer his complex questions. Because of his dedication, he made extraordinary progress.

Carlos not only helped classmates in class but served as a liaison between non-English speaking students and the community. If someone had a vision problem, he would locate the proper social service, call for an appointment and, if necessary, take the person there himself. He became, in essence, an advocate for minorities helping them to become better educated and to navigate the complicated worlds of American employment, housing, medicine, law and welfare. His empathetic nature and willingness to go the extra mile made him respected and well-liked by students of all ethnic backgrounds. Hired as an educational aide by the center in July 1996, Carlos canvasses the neighborhood, going door-to-door and visiting families to promote the importance of education and learning English.

Carlos serves his community in other ways. He and his wife currently look after two foster children. At his church, he mows the lawn, performs other maintenance duties, and drives the transportation van on Sundays. He started a food bank and purchased two freezers to fill with food for those in need. Carlos has a full time job at Wal-Mart. His goals for the future include passing the GED exam and earning his state automobile inspection license so that he can help his community members with servicing their cars. He also hopes to own his own home.

"It's through education one gains knowledge and knowledge in motion is unstoppable."

Linda Brown

county:
Lehigh County

sponsor:
Linda V. McCrossan, Ed.D.

program:
The Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley

Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley

As one of 1,500 community-based literacy organizations in the United States, the Adult Literacy Center (ALC) is dedicated to providing high quality adult education for its community, its workforce, its citizens and family members. Since the inception of the ALC in 1977, the Center has taught 7,500 adults and trained and certified over 2,000 volunteers. Its mission is achieved by providing first-rate programming in Adult Basic Skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages. The ESOL Family Literacy Center has been selected each year since its inception as an exemplary project within the Commonwealth. The agency also provides a Community Learning Center, which serves as an instruction, training, resource and assessment site for students, volunteers and community organizations. The ALC coordinates an annual Buck a Book event, in which school-aged children support the literacy cause though reading and sharing the literacy message with their neighbors and families. Its services are implemented through the integration of a strong and respected professional staff with a cadre of professionally trained and supported volunteers.

Last year, the ALC had an enrollment of 825 (an increase of 10 percent) in 50 sites across the Lehigh Valley, while experiencing a 3.4 percent decrease in expenses. Over 130 volunteers contributed 9,956 hours to the Center, the equivalent of 3.5 years of full-time teaching. Statistics show that the classroom instruction, combined with volunteer tutoring has helped 80 percent of the students increase their skills two levels on standardized tests after 45-50 hours of instruction. In 1996-97, ALC students were employed by 175 area businesses, the largest number of employers to date. Throughout its 20 years of service to the community, the ALC has evidenced a consistent history of accomplishments and has earned a national reputation for its targeted approach, willingness to innovate, and for its success in developing model programs while maintaining high performance standards.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

As a child, Linda Brown dealt not only with emotional and physical abuse but also with continual moving. In 4th grade alone, she was in three different schools. Anxious to leave home, Linda quit school in the 10th grade and worked at many different types of jobs. In 1976, at the age of 18, she got married but soon found herself dealing with abuse again, this time from her husband. After the birth of her daughter, Becky, the abuse worsened, and she left her husband not wanting her child to suffer as she had.

On her own with a child to care for and a limited education, Linda started a landscaping business. Though her math skills were very weak, she was clever enough to compensate for them. For example, when figuring supplies needed for a job, Linda would "walk off the area". While her business was growing, her health was deteriorating. Suffering from chronic back problems, she was forced to give up her business and begin collecting SSI. Knowing she had to be retrained, Linda went to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Despite her 4th grade math level, the OVR counselor recommended that she eventually go to college. She decided to become a Special Education teacher. First, she had to pass the GED. In 1993, she enrolled in small-group classes run by the Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley. With much hard work and regular attendance, she improved her math skills to the point where she passed the GED.

Linda feels that the type of instruction offered in small-group classes, individualized as well as group instruction, benefited her greatly. Because of this strong belief in literacy programs, she became a volunteer tutor working with a literacy student and a student preparing to take his GED. She also worked as a part-time clerical staff member and organized the center's booth at the local fair.

After enrolling full time at Lehigh Carbon Community College, Linda left the center to concentrate on her education. She found herself "starved for knowledge", and she loved all her courses, even math. She became involved in other areas of the college and achieved there as well, despite a fire in her home and an assault on her person. She has received many honors, awards and leadership recognitions including Outstanding Student Leader Award (95-96), Honorary Member of Phi Theta Kappa, and President of the Student Government Association (96-97).

Linda will soon be enrolled at Kutztown University to continue toward her goal of becoming a Special Education teacher. Her daughter said to her the other day, "Mom, you'll be the first woman in the family to graduate from college, and I'll be the second."

"Sister Mayon Sylvain gave me the confidence that I was going to have a future."

Nikiki Blake

county:
Luzerne County

sponsor:
Mary Martin &
Melissa Ashford

program:
Wilkes University
Student Literacy Corps

Wilkes University Student Literacy Corps

The Wilkes University Student Literacy Corps was founded in 1989 with funds provided from Pennsylvania Act 143. Following the goals of the Pennsylvania Literacy Corps for university students to be involved in their local communities, the Wilkes University Student Literacy Corps trains undergraduate students to provide literacy training for adults in Wyoming Valley. During 1996-97, this program was located at the McGlynn Learning Center in Wilkes-Barre. Approximately 40 students in the program currently work with local adult service providers to provide one-to-one tutoring in the areas of GED, ESL, and ABE to between 40 and 80 adult learners each year.

Adult learners receive direct assistance in working toward their vocational, educational and personal literacy goals. The tutors in WLC focus on positive educational experiences and student successes, providing a safe environment for risk-taking while offering support to adults who are enhancing their skills and improving their lives.

Equally important, through this hands-on, community service tradition, university students acquire valuable knowledge and skills as they recognize that people from all walks of life have courage, strength, and values to admire.

Class of
1996

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Nikiki Blake's success story involves a number of agencies and programs working in conjunction. Niki attended school through the 11th grade and eventually was a graduate of the SPOC program where she attained her GED. As a member of the Wilkes Literacy Corps program from September 1996 to May 1997, she was able to improve her research skills, do recruiting for the program, and learn various techniques for better reading, vocabulary and comprehension.

As a resident of Boulevard Townhouses, a low-income housing project, she participated in the Health SPAN Mentor Program, a voluntary neighborhood health promotion program, aimed at increasing women's self-esteem and sense of empowerment. Niki said: "If there were more efforts like this program, there would be more work, more emphasis on education, and less welfare." She and others in the program learned that they could get a job. They learned basic employment skills like appropriate dress for the job, punctuality and skills that they would need for specific jobs.

By helping to bathe and dress elderly patients at the Mercy Health Center, Niki was able to learn first hand about becoming a nursing aide. She discovered that she had the qualities to work with people and that she has a caring heart. She says she owes her success to Sister Mayon Sylvain, the director of the program, "who gave me the push in life that no one else gave me. She taught me to hold my head up high and keep smiling. She gave me the confidence that I was going to have a future."

Niki is presently enrolled in Luzerne County Community College and is carrying 12 credit hours in general studies. She plans to pursue a nursing career. She has learned from her literacy experiences to take advantage of the tutoring that the college offers. She attends classes three days a week while her children are in school and daycare. She is currently doing an internship in the therapy department at a local nursing home and recently started a 20 hour-per-week part-time job.

Niki has always been a parent who took the education of her children seriously. She encouraged her children to be involved in after-school tutoring at the McGlynn Family Learning Center and was an active parent in the program. She is a leader in a community club and a member of the Board of Advisors at her housing development. Niki says that her children are proud of her. They say: "My mom's going to college!" "My mom's going to be a nurse!"

"Returning to the classroom proves you are never too old to learn and to fulfill your goals. Learning is a life-long endeavor."

June M. Fink

county:
Luzerne County

sponsor:
Frank J. Nardone

program:
Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18

Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 Adult Literacy Programs

Since its inception in February, 1984, the Adult Literacy Program co-sponsored by the Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 and the Luzerne County Human Resources Development Department has operated year round, Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Currently all classes are located at JPTA under the supervision of a full-time administrator/counselor/teacher plus one full-time and two part-time teachers. The program is open-ended allowing students to start and finish at any time. A part-time GED examiner provides testing on-site bi-weekly or sooner, as needed. The program works closely with local job centers, school districts, welfare and social agencies, the Armed Forces, television, radio, and the press. Student referrals keep the client case load never ending.

Once a student meets the eligibility requirements, an appointment is scheduled and a GED official practice or pre-test is administered. Based upon the results, the examinee may be ready to take the GED tests or provided with instruction in some subject areas or with a general program of study. A class schedule is prepared and an agreement with the enrollee is signed. Attendance may range from part-time to full-time with scheduling geared to student's ability to attend based upon outside responsibilities.

"Adult Literacy: A Second Chance for Life" is the philosophy that governs the student-teacher relationship. The majority of instruction is one-on-one. Patience is paramount since instructors work with people from all walks of life and ages. The program enrolls mothers, brothers, sons and daughters, family relatives and friends based upon referrals from previous students. From 1984 to December 1997, the agency has enrolled 4,653 students. Of the 3,503 who have taken the GED test, 3,131 have passed. Approximately 60 percent of the program's students have gone on to further study or gained employment.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

For 27-1/2 years, June Fink was literally and figuratively on top of the employment world. She had a steady job, good pay and benefits with Topps Manufacturing in Duryea, Pennsylvania, famous for chewing gum and athletic trading cards. She was looking forward to retirement, Social Security and a pension when the bubble burst in December 1996. At age 54, she faced the fact that she had dropped out of school in 1977 and that without her education, it would be hard to find a job. "I see now that leaving school was not the answer," June asserted.

Since she enrolled in the Luzerne Intermediate Unit's adult literacy program in November, 1996, June has embodied the highest levels of perseverance, personal growth, and professionalism. She demonstrated an exemplary commitment to her work and her associates. Elected as a Group Leader by her peers, she extends herself to others and is a wonderful role model for younger students. She balances her studies with the domestic responsibilities of being a wife and mother.

By the time June completed the program in March of 1997, she was ready to test for her GED even though she didn't have time to participate in GED preparation classes. She had been selected to intern at a citywide program where her skills and dedication were immediately recognized. During this hectic period, she received an emergency call informing her of a fire at her home. Her house was destroyed; and June, her husband, and four children had to move in with relatives. Despite the trauma and turmoil, she continued her internship as well as her independent GED studies. Although she scored more than enough points overall on the GED test, June realized with dismay that she would have to retest in Math. Undaunted, she intensified her preparation while she searched for a job.

In May 1997, June went to work part-time as a program assistant for a job readiness program. She retested in math, successfully passed her GED, and was one of three alumni singled out for distinction at graduation ceremonies last June. She has continued to maintain a close relationship with the Luzerne Intermediate Unit's adult literacy program and enthusiastically recommends it to friends, relatives, and coworkers. June also volunteers her services as secretary to her congregation. Her status on the job is now full-time and she is presently working in the Job Club where she assists students to find jobs of their own. Her oldest daughter is a high school graduate who's working full time before she enrolls in college, and the younger children are all still in school.

"Education changes everything we do and everything we are."

Theresa Banford

county:
Philadelphia County

sponsor:
Jean L. Fleschute

program:
Community Learning Center

Community Learning Center

The Community Learning Center (CLC), which has provided literacy education to Kensington and North Philadelphia neighborhoods for 11 years, serves 300 to 325 students annually. In addition to teaching basic skills education in reading, writing, and mathematics, GED preparation and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, CLC also works with students to improve their employment readiness. The agency's mission is to provide economically disadvantaged adults with literacy skills that empower them to effect change in their lives and in their communities. Toward that end, the agency strives to integrate students' lives into curriculum and program planning and to provide support to learners as they determine their next steps after leaving CLC.

Education at CLC is a process of development and growth for everyone involved. What the staff learns from their students is integral to their own development as educators and individuals. And learners are actively involved at every level of the organization. They set their own short and long-term goals; they co-construct curricula and class activities; they take part in assessment, and evaluate themselves, the staff, and the program. CLC uses a collaborative approach to learning to foster greater interest and participation and to help learners develop leadership skills. Students are then better able to achieve educational, work, personal, and family goals, and become more effective participants in their communities.

Class of
1998

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Terry and Anthony were high school sweethearts when she dropped out of 11th grade to marry him. For the next 20 years Anthony supported their family while Terry raised the children and sometimes worked as a seamstress. Anthony died on August 28, 1992, of a massive heart attack leaving Terry, at age 37, a widow with four school-aged children to support on a five-dollar-an-hour seamstress job. Feeling as if she had hit rock bottom, Terry sought therapy. Her counselor suggested that she return to school.

In January of 1993, five months after her husband's death, Terry called the Community Learning Center and talked her way into an already-filled class. By June, she had completed her GED, won a $500 Women in Education scholarship and registered at the Community College of Philadelphia. In May of 1995, she graduated with a 3.7 GPA, earning an associate degree. She was listed in the Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges. Today, she is a senior at Temple University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work. She maintains a GPA of 3.5 and has been awarded the Sol Feinstone Memorial Award, the Megan and Emily Peck Memorial Scholarship, and the Maybelline Award.

In addition to attending college full-time and raising her four children, Terry works as a case manager at the Community Learning Center. She offers adult learners the perspective of someone who has been through the same program and is on the same path. Her work schedule has been arranged to accommodate her family and school responsibilities which include caring for her son after his recent spinal surgery and interning at Catholic Social Services.

In addition to her paid job, Terry has devoted many volunteer hours to CLC's program, giving extra support to the students and participating in community service activities. She also contributes hours to her church, chaperones dances at her daughter's school, and volunteers as a liaison for students making the transition from the Community College of Philadelphia to Temple University.

In May of 1998, Terry will graduate from Temple. She has applied to Temple's accelerated Master's program, and intends to become a social worker. Her accomplishments are especially noteworthy considering that she came from a home that placed no emphasis on education. The oldest of six, Terry was the family caretaker. Her ability to help herself and others has to do with her feelings about the power of education. She asserts, "Education changes everything that we do and everything that we are."

"You hold the key to your educational future"

Carmen Feliciano Nunez

county:
Philadelphia County

sponsor:
Karen Reed Hadalski

program:
The Lighthouse

Class of
1998

The Lighthouse

Since 1893, The Lighthouse has met the social service needs of the residents of eastern North Philadelphia and Kensington. Established as a settlement house to assist newly arrived immigrants, The Lighthouse has developed into a multifaceted agency with programs designed to meet the needs, goals and aspirations of a cross-generational population. Throughout the past 105 years, its programs and services have emerged, altered, and receded along with its ever-changing neighborhood.

Today, services include year-round social, cultural, educational and recreational programs for children aged 3-19; an adult education program comprised of a multilevel English as a Second Language curriculum along with courses in Adult Basic Education, Pre-GED and GED; a TEEN Parenting course that combines academics with job readiness; parenting and life-skills instruction; and an Even Start Family Literacy Program.

Individuals For Success is a new eight week job readiness program which works in concert with the Job Resource Center, Business Service Center and Job Club to successfully prepare clients to locate, apply for, obtain, and retain jobs appropriate to their individual talents, interests and needs. The Lighthouse looks toward the future with goals of expansion and optimism as it strives to include an even greater segment of its service area in programs designed to increase education, self-esteem, professional fulfillment and economic autonomy.

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

When Carmen Feliciano's family moved from New York City to Philadelphia, she had a hard time adjusting to her new environment. In January of 1989, she dropped out of the 10th grade in order to get a job. Then she could afford her own apartment instead of living with her husband in his brother's basement. She planned to attend GED classes but when her spouse was threatened with kidney failure and she learned that she was pregnant, she couldn't concentrate on going back to school.

On May 26, 1993, she gave birth to her daughter, Anilis, and promised herself to enroll in class after her daughter's first birthday. But the day before her daughter's birthday, the hospital informed the family that they had a perfect match for her husband's kidney. They would perform a transplant the next day. Her husband was confined to bed for six months to a year. However, he promised Carmen that he would care for their daughter as soon as possible, so that she could pursue her education.

Carmen started pre-GED classes at The Lighthouse in September of 1994. Learning that the director of the program was seeking a student worker, she applied and was hired to work three days a week. While taking care of her spouse and her year-old baby, doing house work, and going to dialysis appointments, she still managed to maintain her position as a student worker and to attend classes four nights a week for three hours nightly. In December, 1994, she was promoted to part-time secretary.

Advancing to the GED level in January 1995, she was now working five days a week. Struggling with the fact that her husband had not fully recovered from his operation, Carmen asked her mother to care for her daughter. She then passed all five GED tests on her first try. After graduating in August, 1995, she was promoted to administrative assistant and enrolled in the Community College of Philadelphia.

Carmen is in her fourth semester in the Medical Assistant/Office Management program and plans to take classes in small business management. Despite her husband's being hospitalized three times and her daughter's being diagnosed with epileptic seizures, she still finds time to run errands for her mother (who is visually impaired) and take her husband and daughter to doctors' appointments. At work, she gives tutoring sessions, advises students, and helps promote the program by letting families, friends and neighbors know when it's time for class registration. Carmen says: "Everything that I have and what I am now is all thanks to my mother. She pushed and fought with me so that I would be a good role model for my daughter. And I intend to do just that, teach her the way my mother taught me."

"Never give up."

Mary Vinzulis

county:
Philadelphia County

sponsor:
Bette Ann D. Lawrence

program:
Community College
of Philadelphia
Adult Education Program

Community College of Philadelphia, Adult Education Program

The Community College of Philadelphia's Adult Education Program is located in the Division of Community Services and Continuing Education which offers a wide array of credit and noncredit programs. In its 18th year, this program, consisting of ABE, ESL, Citizenship, and Workforce Literacy classes, has served thousands of students from all walks of life.

ABE classes are offered to all Philadelphia residents whose basic reading and writing skills are below an elementary level of competency. Basic education classes are available to all adults (17 years of age or older) who are unable to read, write or speak English at a level of competency that would permit them to lead productive lives. Free instruction in reading, writing speaking, mathematics, pre-GED, ESL, life skills and job readiness is available at many neighborhood sites, as well as each of the Regional Centers, during days and evenings from September through June.

The GED course consists of intensive 90-hour classes that help students prepare for the GED examination. These classes permit students to study the major skills areas (mathematics and reading/writing) separately or to attend an overview course that covers all areas. Each class is offered on two levels. Students' skills are assessed during the orientation on the first day of class. Based on the assessment, students are placed into the proper level of the class.

The Community College of Philadelphia Adult Education Program currently serves 5,000 students. The staff is large and diverse which mirrors the student population. More than 52 languages and/or ethnic groups are represented.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Outstanding Adult Students

The eldest of 11 children, Mary Vinzulis liked school and was an eager learner. But as the daughter of a coal miner, she had to face frequent moves; whenever the family moved, she was put back a grade. The longest she spent in one school was five years. When she turned 14, her father told her that she had to go to work. At age 18 she came to Philadelphia and got a job making aprons at $8 dollars a week. She soon found another job paying $16 a week and thought she was rich. She could send more money home.

Mary married at 20, had three children, and struggled to make ends meet. By the time she retired, she had worked for 45 years as a power sewing machine operator. She began work in the garment industry making inexpensive aprons and ended up doing complete, expensive, custom ensembles (dress and coat) for the company's private clients and specialty shops. Her work required perfection and intense concentration. From time to time, she tried to take classes, but time, distance, and lack of reliable transportation interfered with her plans. She did earn a certificate in public speaking.

When a neighbor told Mary about the Community College of Philadelphia's ABE classes at Penn Memorial Baptist Church, she followed up on the lead, enrolling in 1994. The location and hours were perfect for her, and in October of 1997, she took her last two GED tests. When she entered the program, Mary was an informed and avid reader, but her test taking skills were weak. She learned test-taking strategies as well as basic skills to get the correct answers quickly. Her math, especially fractions, decimals, and percents, needed attention. She worked diligently to understand math concepts, and when other students asked her for help, she was able to give it.

Her report card reads: A for effort; A for achievement; Excellent for attendance. She's always prepared, does neat, careful work, completes assignments, participates in class, is cheerful, helpful, willing, considerate. She sets a good example, inspires others, and is well liked by her classmates. In truth, this is Mary's lifetime report card. She has been a good daughter, wife, mother, friend, citizen, and employee.

Her working years and Red Cross volunteer days were behind her when she started ABE classes. In essence, she had paid her dues in advance. She lived a life of service to others before pursuing her own quiet dream of continuing her formal education. She is currently writing her family history. The lesson she teaches us is: "It's never too late." Her determination and perseverance have inspired other students. Waiting for her GED results has Mary on "pins and needles." Whatever her score, she is a winner, at 88 years of age.

"It's important for me to go to class with new learners to support and help them."

Itavia Wilson

county:
Philadelphia County

sponsor:
JoAnn Weinberger

program:
Center for Literacy, Inc.

Center for Literacy, Inc.

The Center for Literacy (CFL) is the nation's largest community-based, nonprofit, adult literacy organization. Since 1968, it has been providing adult basic and literacy education throughout Philadelphia to adults who lack the reading, writing, math and English language skills needed to function in society. The mission of CFL is "to provide free literacy instruction and a wide range of other adult literacy services that respond to the diversity of individuals and enable adult learners to meet their goals." Toward this end, CFL practices a learner-centered, goal-oriented philosophy of instruction. In 1994, CFL was one of ten programs in the country to receive the U.S. Secretary of Education's Award as an Outstanding Adult Education and Literacy Program.

In 1996, CFL served 2,849 students through the services of 386 volunteer tutors and 45 professional staff at 108 sites throughout Philadelphia. Its diverse services include one-to-one and small-group tutoring with trained volunteers and classes taught by professional educators. Its innovative and collaborative programs serve parents of Head Start and Even Start children, front-line workers in many Philadelphia industries and businesses, welfare recipients who need literacy skills in order to pursue job training, parolees and probationers, and members of the community who wish to improve their reading, writing and math skills.

Class of
1998

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

Itavia has been a dynamic member of the Center for Literacy since her entry into the adult basic education program in 1995 when she was refused employment because she did not have a high school diploma. Having completed 10th grade, she decided to pursue her GED by beginning with a math class and then proceeding to a reading and writing class.

The agency's coordinator saw tremendous leadership potential in her and asked her to assist during a tutor training session he was conducting. She now assists with student/tutor trainings on a regular basis and conducts orientation meetings for new students. She has herself tutored two learners in reading and math. One was barely able to write the alphabet and the other wanted to brush up on writing skills. She was able to apply the skills she learned by teaching them to others. By the end of her tutoring commitment, both learners had made significant progress.

Because of her outstanding work, she was hired as a student coordinator for five hours a week. Her duties included providing support to learners, telephoning them when they were absent and helping to negotiate the obstacles which impeded their progress in class. She also served as an outreach coordinator for an additional fifteen hours per week, recruiting and orienting learners.

As a learner, she designed her own individual plan of instruction. By October, 1997, she had passed two sections of the GED test and continued to work on reading and writing so that she could take the remaining three sections. Her immediate goal is to receive her GED and attend the community college in order to pursue studies in social work so she can help adults and children. Her excellent communication skills, strong work ethic and optimistic personality inspire both learners and staff.

Her success is all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that she is a single parent of four daughters ranging from eight to 14 years of age. Her primary motivation in pursuing education is to help her children grow. At first they did not realize that she was in school; but when they did, they were proud and excited. Now Itavia and her children help each other with homework. In the summer of 1996, she attended camp with her children to share stimulating reading, writing and math activities with them. Thanks to her focus on self-improvement, she has been able to purchase a car for her family.

Itavia is a constant supporter of the Center for Literacy's program, especially for new learners who have broken down in tears at the idea of addressing seemingly insurmountable learning goals. She is an outstanding learner because she demonstrates a high level of personal commitment to education.

1997 OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENTS

Front row (left to right): Carmen Feliciano Nunez, Linda Brown, June Fink, Mary Vinzulis

Back row (left to right): Itavia Wilson, Lidia Bogush, Carlos Barreto, Nikiki Blake, Theresa Banford, and April Pearson

PAACE

These students were honored at the 1998 Pennsylvania Midwinter Conference cosponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE).

PAACE's membership includes teachers, tutors, counselors, professors, administrators, librarians, students and volunteers who work with adult learners in institutions of basic and higher education, businesses and community agencies. In addition to an annual Midwinter Conference, PAACE sponsors special interest sections and publishes a newsletter, journal and membership directory. It is affiliated with the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE).

Success Stories Booklet

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If you have any questions about this publication, or for additional copies, contact Cheryl Harmon, Clearinghouse AdvancE, Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, voice telephone: (800) 992-2283, out-of-state voice telephone (717) 783-9192, text telephone TTV: (717) 783-8445, FAX: (717) 783-5420.

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SUCCESS STORIES: Partners for Progress

20th Anniversary Edition

#98-8002 FY 1997-98

Project Director and Editor: Sherry Royce

PARTNERS *for* PROGRESS

June's STORY

For 27½ years, June Fink was literally and figuratively on top of the employment world. She had a steady job, good pay and benefits with Topps Manufacturing in Duryea, Pennsylvania, famous for chewing gum and athletic trading cards. She was looking forward to retirement, Social Security and a pension when the bubble burst in December 1996. At age 54, she faced the fact that she had dropped out of school in 1977 and that without her education, it would be hard to find a job. "I see now that leaving school was not the answer," June asserted.

"Returning to the classroom proves that you are never too old to learn and fulfill your goals. Learning is a lifelong endeavor."

Since she enrolled in the Luzerne Intermediate Unit's adult literacy program in November, 1996, June has embodied the highest levels of perseverance, personal growth, and professionalism. She demonstrated an exemplary commitment to her work and her associates. Elected as a Group Leader by her peers, she extends herself to others and is a wonderful role model for younger students. She balances her studies with the domestic responsibilities of being a wife and mother.

By the time June completed the program in March of 1997, she was ready to test for her GED even though she didn't have time to participate in GED preparation classes. She had been selected to intern at a citywide program where her skills and dedication were immediately recognized. During this hectic period, she received an emergency call informing her of a fire at her home. Her house was destroyed and June, her husband, and four children had to move in with relatives. Despite the trauma and turmoil, she continued her internship as well as her independent GED studies. Although she scored more than enough points overall on the GED test, June realized with dismay that she would have to retest in Math. Undaunted, she intensified her preparation while she searched for a job.

In May 1997, June went to work part-time as a program assistant for a job readiness program. She retested in math, successfully passed her GED, and was one of three alumni singled out for distinction at graduation ceremonies last June. She has continued to maintain a close relationship with the Luzerne Intermediate Unit's adult literacy program and enthusiastically recommends it to friends, relatives, and coworkers. June also volunteers her services as secretary to her congregation. Her status on the job is now full time and she is presently working in the Job Club where she assists students to find jobs of their own. Her oldest daughter is a high school graduate who's working full time before she enrolls in college, and the younger children are all still in school.

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

LUZERNE INTERMEDIATE UNIT 18

LUZERNE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

368 Tioga Avenue #1649 • Kingston, PA 18704

CALL: (717) 287-2161

Nikiki's STORY

Nikiki's success story involves a number of agencies and programs working in conjunction. Niki attended school through the 11th grade and subsequently was a graduate of the SPOC program where she attained her GED. As a member of the Wilkes Literacy Corps program from September 1996 to May 1997, she was able to improve her research skills, do recruiting for the program, and learn various techniques for better reading, vocabulary and comprehension.

As a resident of Boulevard Townhouses, a low-income housing project, she participated in the Health SPAN Mentor Program, a voluntary neighborhood health promotion program, aimed at increasing women's self-esteem and sense of empowerment. Niki said: "If there were more efforts like this program, there would be more work, more emphasis on education, and less welfare." She and others in the program learned that they could get a job. They learned basic employment skills like appropriate dress for the job, punctuality and skills that they would need for specific jobs.

By helping to bathe and dress elderly patients at the Mercy Health Center, Niki was able to learn first hand about becoming a nursing aide. She discovered that she had the qualities to work with people and that she has a caring heart. She says she owes her success to Sister Mayon Sylvain, the director of the program, "Who gave me the push in life that no one else gave me. She taught me to hold my head up high and keep smiling. She gave me the confidence that I was going to have a future."

"Sister Mayhon Sylvain gave me the confidence that I was going to have a future."

Niki is presently enrolled in Luzerne County Community College and is carrying 12 credit hours in general studies. She plans to pursue a nursing career. She has learned from her literacy experiences to take advantage of the tutoring that the college offers. She attends classes three days a week while her children are in school and day care. She is currently doing an internship in the therapy department at a local nursing home and recently started a 20 hour-per-week part-time job.

Niki has always been a parent who took the education of her children seriously. She encouraged her children to be involved in after-school tutoring at the McGlynn Family Learning Center and was an active parent in the program. She is a leader in a community club and a member of the Board of Advisors at her housing development. Niki says that her children are proud of her. They say: "My mom's going to college!" "My mom's going to be a nurse!"

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

WILKES UNIVERSITY LITERACY CORPS

170 South Franklin Street • Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766

CALL: (717) 833-4680

Carmen's STORY

When Carmen family moved from New York City to Philadelphia, she had a hard time adjusting to her new environment. In January of 1989, she dropped out of the 10th grade in order to get a job. Then she could afford her own apartment instead of living with her husband in his brother's basement. She planned to attend GED classes but when her spouse was threatened with kidney failure and she learned that she was pregnant, she couldn't concentrate on going back to school.

On May 26, 1993, she gave birth to her daughter, Anilis, and promised herself to enroll in class after her daughter's first birthday. But the day before her daughter's birthday, the hospital informed the family that they had a perfect match for her husband's kidney. They would perform a transplant the next day. Her husband was confined to bed for six months to a year. However, he promised Carmen that he would care for their daughter as soon as possible, so that she could pursue her education.

Carmen started pre-GED classes at The Lighthouse in September of 1994. Learning that the director of the program was seeking a student worker, she applied and wast hired to work three days a week. While taking care of her spouse and her year-old baby, doing house work, and going to dialysis appointments, she still managed to maintain her position as a student worker and to attend classes four nights a week for three hours nightly. In December, 1994, she was promoted to part-time secretary.

Advancing to the GED level in January 1995, she was now working 5 days a week. Struggling with the fact that her husband had not fully recovered from his operation, Carmen asked her mother to care for her daughter. She then passed all five GED tests on her first try. After graduating in August, 1995, she was promoted to administrative assistant and enrolled in the Community College of Philadelphia.

"You hold the key to your educational future."

Carmen is in her fourth semester in the Medical Assistant/Office Management program and plans to take classes in small business management. Despite her husband's being hospitalized three times and her daughter's being diagnosed with epileptic seizures, she still finds time to run errands for her mother (who is visually impaired) and take her husband and daughter to doctors' appointments. At work, she gives tutoring sessions, advises students, and helps promote the program by letting families, friends and neighbors know when it's time for class registration. Carmen says: "Everything that I have and what I am now is all thanks to my mother. She pushed and fought with me so that I would be a good role model for my daughter. And I intend to do just that, teach her the way my mother taught me."

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

THE LIGHTHOUSE

152 West Lehigh Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19133

CALL: (215) 425-7800

Terry's STORY

Terry and Anthony were high school sweethearts when she dropped out of 11th grade to marry him. For the next 20 years, Anthony supported their family while Terry raised the children and sometimes worked as a seamstress. Anthony died on August 28, 1992, of a massive heart attack leaving Terry, at age 37, a widow with four school-aged children to support on a five-dollar-an-hour seamstress job. Feeling as if she had hit rock bottom, Terry sought therapy. Her counselor suggested that she return to school.

In January of 1993, five months after her husband's death, Terry called the Community Learning Center and talked her way into an already-filled class. By June, she had completed her GED, won a $500 Women in Education scholarship and registered at the Community College of Philadelphia. In May of 1995, she graduated with a 3.7 GPA, earning an Associate degree. She was listed in the Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges. Today, she is a senior at Temple University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work. She maintains a GPA of 3.5 and has been awarded the Sol Feinstone Memorial Award, the Megan and Emily Peck Memorial Scholarship, and the Maybelline Award.

In addition to attending college full-time and raising her four children, Terry works as a case manager at the Community Learning Center. She offers adult learners the perspective of someone who has been through the same program and is on the same path. Her work schedule has been arranged to accommodate her family and school responsibilities which include caring for her son after his recent spinal surgery and interning at Catholic Social Services.

"Education changes everything we do and everything we are."

In addition to her paid job, Terry has devoted many volunteer hours to CLC's program, giving extra support to the students and participating in community service activities. She also contributes hours to her church, chaperones dances at her daughter's school, and volunteers as a liaison for students making the transition from the Community College of Philadelphia to Temple University.

In May of 1998, Terry will graduate from Temple. She has applied to Temple's accelerated Master's program, and intends to become a social worker. Her accomplishments are especially noteworthy considering that she came from a home that placed no emphasis on education. The oldest of six, Terry was the family caretaker. Her ability to help herself and others has to do with her feelings about the power of education. She asserts, "Education changes everything that we do and everything that we are."

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

2801 Frankford Avenue at Somerset Street • Philadelphia, PA 19134

CALL: (215) 426-7940

April's STORY

In 1980, at the age of 16, April dropped out of school. She had completed 8th grade and had just given birth to her first child. In 1985, she made an unsuccessful attempt to pass the GED test, but that failure did not deter her from pursuing her goals. While raising five children, she continued to focus on her goals of passing the GED and beginning a career. Since her husband is in prison, she must rely on her own skills and resources.

"Doing something different for myself was a chance to set an example for my children."

In November 1996, April enrolled at the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC). As a member of the policy council of the Dorseyville Head Start program, she took a leadership role in helping set up a GPLC class for Head Start parents. Furthermore, April requested additional hours when it appeared that two days per week of classes would not be sufficient for her and the other students to achieve their goals. She also located a class site when the Head Start program shut down over the summer.

In September, 1997, after attending class four days a week for 10 months, she passed the GED with a score of 286. April then enrolled in a food service training program at Connelley Technical Institute. Her studies and a very long commute by public transportation kept her away from her family for nine hours a day, five days a week. She persuaded her mother to live with her for the duration of her studies. She carefully prepared her children for the additional responsibilities they would have to share for her to make an improvement for their future. April believes her own education is directly linked to the future well-being of her children.

During the summer of 1997, April worked as the coordinator of the breakfast and lunch program for children in her subsidized housing community, Hutton Arbors. In performing her job, she demonstrated creativity and leadership and served as a good example to her neighbors. She was proud of the fact that she was studying for her GED and has promoted the adult education program to others. As a result of her efforts, four other residents of her housing community have enrolled in the program.

Although she passed the math section of the GED test with a score of 51, April was not satisfied with her math level. She contacted her tutor for additional help, and they continue to work together two days a week. They are focusing on the math that is involved in cooking large quantities of food.

April completed her food service training in December 1997, and hopes to secure a full-time job as a chef as soon as possible. At that point she will be happy to leave the welfare rolls. Her ultimate career goal is to open her own restaurant.

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

GREATER PITTSBURGH LITERACY COUNCIL

100 Sheridan Square (4th Floor) • Pittsburgh, PA 15206

CALL: (412) 661-7323

Lidia's STORY

After a 10 year struggle to leave Communist Romania with her husband and nine children, Lidia and her family arrived in the United States in 1991. The promise of a job for her husband never materialized, and the family found themselves on welfare. The following year brought another child. Then, Lidia suffered a serious stroke caused by the birth control treatment she received. She hadn't understood what she was being given because she didn't understand English.

After the stroke, Lidia was unable to speak, walk and think clearly. Her husband had to take care of her and the children while Lidia, who was very depressed, stayed in bed unable to do anything for her family. As she began to feel better, she started studying English by herself. After one year, she could read children's books in English.

She was determined to master this new language. In 1996, she registered for an ESL class at Reading Area Community College (RACC) and attended morning and afternoon sessions two days a week. Wanting more class time, she enrolled in a GED class that met twice a week. She raced through all her subjects, challenging her classmates to keep up the pace. To have more time to learn English, she spent another day at the Literacy Council in Reading.

In March, Lidia found herself in the hospital for five days, pregnant again, and in poor health. She came out of the hospital fighting to keep the baby and to keep up her studies. In September 1996, she passed the GED test. In October, she delivered her 11th child. In December, she was admitted to RACC to continue her education. With a full course load, her name has appeared on the Dean's List with GPA's of 3.89 and 3.90.

"America has provided me the opportunity to fulfill my educational dreams."

With her perseverance at school, her English has blossomed along with her self-esteem. Her husband supports her dreams by working a third-shift job so he can watch the children while she attends classes. Lidia is proud that she can help her children with their English grammar and other schoolwork. She has returned to her GED classroom to tell her story and encourage others. Her oldest daughter has followed in her footsteps as a part-time student while holding a full-time job. Lidia is happy that her experience has inspired her husband to learn more English.

Today, at age 41, she has the same dream that she had as a teenager in Romania. After finishing her studies, Lidia hopes to transfer to a four-year institution and continue her education in order to fulfill her dream of becoming a dentist.

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

P.O. Box 1706 • Reading, PA 19603

CALL: (610) 607-6227

Linda's STORY

As a child, Linda dealt not only with emotional and physical abuse but also with continual moving. In 4th grade alone, she was in three different schools. Anxious to leave home, Linda quit school in the 10th grade and worked at many different types of jobs. In 1976, at the age of 18, she got married but soon found herself dealing with abuse again, this time from her husband. After the birth of her daughter, Becky, the abuse worsened, and she left her husband not wanting her child to suffer as she had.

On her own with a child to care for and a limited education, Linda started a landscaping business. Though her math skills were very weak, she was clever enough to compensate for them. For example, when figuring supplies needed for a job, Linda would "walk off the area". While her business was growing, her health was deteriorating. Suffering from chronic back problems, she was forced to give up her business and begin collecting SSI. Knowing she had to be retrained, Linda went to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Despite her 4th grade math level, the OVR counselor recommended that she eventually go to college. She decided to become a Special Education teacher. First, she had to pass the GED. In 1993, she enrolled in small group classes run by the Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley. With much hard work and regular attendance, she improved her math skills to the point where she passed the GED.

Linda feels that the type of instruction offered in small group classes, individualized as well as group instruction, benefited her greatly. Because of this strong belief in literacy programs, she became a volunteer tutor working with a literacy student and a student preparing to take his GED. She also worked as a part-time clerical staff member and organized the center's booth at the local fair.

"It's through education one gains knowledge, and knowledge in motion is unstoppable."

After enrolling full time at Lehigh Carbon Community College, Linda left the center to concentrate on her education. She found herself "starved for knowledge", and she loved all her courses, even math. She became involved in other areas of the college and achieved there as well, despite a fire in her home and an assault on her person. She has received many honors, awards and leadership recognitions including Outstanding Student Leader Award (95-96), Honorary Member of Phi Theta Kappa, and President of the Student Government Association (96-97).

Linda will soon be enrolled at Kutztown University to continue toward her goal of becoming a Special Education teacher. Her daughter said to her the other day, "Mom, you'll be the first woman in the family to graduate from college, and I'll be the second."

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

ADULT LITERACY CENTER OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

801 Hamilton Mall, STE 201 • Allentown, PA 18101

CALL: (610) 435-0680

Carlos's STORY

A native of Puerto Rico, Carlos was 15 years old when his father abandoned the family. Carlos quit school and went to work to provide for his mother and three younger siblings, He worked as a laborer, a bodyguard, a security guard and an auto mechanic. He also spent 15 years as a professional wrestler until broken bones and a broken marriage ended his career.

When he moved to the United States in 1987, he found himself doing heavy farm labor, often working from 4:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. He realized that to improve life for himself and his family, he had to learn English. In January 1996, his brother-in-law told him about a neighborhood community center that offered ESL classes. That very day, Carlos enrolled at the Quality of Life Learning Center run by the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit. His ambition and eagerness sparked the entire class. He wrote lists of words he heard most often, looked them up in his dictionary and studied them at home. Two years later, these lists are still being used by others in the ESL classroom. His quest to learn the fine points of English grammar raised the level of the class, sending his teacher to textbooks to answer his complex questions. Because of his dedication, he made extraordinary progress.

Carlos not only helped classmates in class but served as a liaison between non-English speaking students and the community. If someone had a vision problem, he would locate the proper social service, call for an appointment and, if necessary, take the person there himself. He became, in essence, an advocate for minorities helping them to become better educated and to navigate the complicated worlds of American employment, housing, medicine, law and welfare. His empathetic nature and willingness to go the extra mile made him respected and well-liked by students of all ethnic backgrounds. Hired as an educational aide by the center in July 1996, Carlos canvasses the neighborhood, going door-to-door and visiting families to promote the importance of education and learning English.

"It's never too late to learn. It is not easy, but it is possible."

Carlos serves his community in other ways. He and his wife currently look after two foster children. At his church, he mows the lawn, performs other maintenance duties, and drives the transportation van on Sundays. He started a food bank and purchased two freezers to fill with food for those in need. Carlos has a full time job at Wal-Mart. His goals for the future include passing the GED exam and earning his state automobile inspection license so that he can help his community members with servicing their cars. He also hopes to own his own home.

Give the Gift of Learning!

Tell someone you love about:

NORTHWEST TRI-COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT 5

670 West 36th Street • Erie, PA 16508-2645

CALL: (814) 866-3775

Itavia's STORY

Itavia has been a dynamic member of The Center for Literacy since her entry into the adult basic education program in 1995 when she was refused employment because she did not have a high school diploma. Having completed 10th grade, she decided to pursue her GED by beginning with a math class and then proceeding to a reading and writing class.

The agency's coordinator saw tremendous leadership potential in her and asked her to assist during a tutor training session he was conducting. She now assists with student/tutor trainings on a regular basis and conducts orientation meetings for new students. She has herself tutored two learners in reading and math. One was barely able to write the alphabet and the other wanted to brush up on writing skills. She was able to apply the skills she learned by teaching them to others. By the end of her tutoring commitment, both learners had made significant progress.

Because of her outstanding work, she was hired as a student coordinator for five hours a week. Her duties included providing support to learners, telephoning them when they were absent and helping to negotiate the obstacles which impeded their progress in class. She also served as an outreach coordinator for an additional fifteen hours per week, recruiting and orienting learners.

"It's important to me to go to class with new learners to support and help them."

As a learner, she designed her own individual plan of instruction. By October, 1997, she had passed two sections of the GED test and continued to work on reading and writing so that she could take the remaining three sections. Her immediate goal is to receive her GED and attend the community college in order to pursue studies in social work so she can help adults and children. Her excellent communication skills, strong work ethic and optimistic personality inspire both learners and staff.

Her success is all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that she is a young single parent of four daughters ranging from eight to 14 years of age. Her primary motivation in pursuing education is to help them grow. At first they did not realize that she was in school; but when they did, they were proud and excited. Now Itavia and her children help each other with homework. In the summer of 1996, she attended camp with her children to share stimulating reading, writing and math activities with them. Thanks to her focus on self-improvement, she has been able to purchase a car for her family.

Itavia is a constant supporter of our program, especially for new learners who have broken down in tears at the idea of addressing seemingly insurmountable learning goals. She is an outstanding learner because she demonstrates a high level of personal commitment to education.

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Mary's STORY

The eldest of 11 children, Mary liked school and was an eager learner. But as the daughter of a coal miner, she had to face frequent moves; whenever the family moved, she was put back a grade. The longest she spent in one school was five years. When she turned 14, her father told her that she had to go to work. At age 18 she came to Philadelphia and got a job making aprons at $8 dollars a week. She soon found another job paying $16 a week and thought she was rich. She could send more money home.

Mary married at 20, had three children, and struggled to make ends meet. By the time she retired, she had worked for 45 years as a power sewing machine operator. She began work in the garment industry making inexpensive aprons and ended up doing complete, expensive, custom ensembles (dress and coat) for the company's private clients and specialty shops. Her work required perfection and intense concentration. From time to time, she tried to take classes, but time, distance, and lack of reliable transportation interfered with her plans. She did earn a certificate in public speaking.

When a neighbor told Mary about the Community College of Philadelphia's ABE classes at Pinn Memorial Baptist Church, she followed up on the lead, enrolling in 1994. The location and hours were perfect for her, and in October of 1997, she took her last two GED tests. When she entered the program, Mary was an informed and avid reader, but her test taking skills were weak. She learned test-taking strategies as well as basic skills to get the correct answers quickly. Her math, especially fractions, decimals, and per cents, needed attention. She worked diligently to understand math concepts, and when other students asked her for help, she was able to give it.

"Never give up."

Her report card reads: A for effort; A for achievement; Excellent for attendance. She's always prepared, does neat, careful work, completes assignments, participates in class, is cheerful, helpful, willing, considerate. She sets a good example, inspires others, and is well liked by her classmates. In truth, this is Mary's lifetime report card. She has been a good daughter, wife, mother, friend, citizen, and employee.

Her working years and Red Cross volunteer days were behind her when she started ABE classes. In essence, she had paid her dues in advance. She lived a life of service to others before pursuing her own quiet dream of continuing her formal education. She is currently writing her family history. The lesson she teaches us is: "It's never too late." Her determination and perseverance have inspired other students. Waiting for her GED results has Mary on "pins and needles." Whatever her score, she is a winner, at 88 years of age.

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